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Participants' Experience of Service-Learning in a Self-
Financing Post-Secondary Education Institution
in Hong Kong

WONG Kam Chung

A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol
in accordance with the requirements of the degree of
Doctor of Education
in the Graduate School of Education

Supervisor: Dr. Sheila Trahar

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Abstract

This study has examined, within the context of a post-secondary education institute in Hong Kong, the practice of Service-Learning as an educational initiative. A qualitative case study method was employed to explore the experiences of both the student participants and the staff members involved in the Service-Learning process. Data collection took place in the form of semi-structured individual interviews, focus group and student reflective journal. Eleven students from different academic programmes and at different HKQF levels are selected as the informants. In addition, three staff members of the organization were selected for interviews.

In this study, benefits of Service-Learning for students are identified: (1) citizenship behaviors; (2) interpersonal development; (3) personal development and (4) intellectual development. The service experiences allow students to explore and experience different social situations and scenarios that they have never met in their classroom learning. The process will help students to develop their self confidence and social skills in relating to others. More importantly, Service-Learning will enhance students' competences and so with their employability after graduation.

In searching for relevant service opportunities for the student participants, the consideration of 'student ownership' is found to be very important. 'Student Ownership', on the basis of my findings, is enhanced by three factors: (1) freedom of choice in selecting service opportunities; (2) pre-service training and (3) students' autonomy in planning and designing the service projects. Moreover, student and staff informants indicate that support from the senior management of the College is a 'must' for any success in service projects.

Service coordinators/ mentors have to create an appropriate learning environment for students. To create such environment, service coordinators/ mentors not only play roles such as advisor, coordinator, leader, trainer, information provider, project manager, but also play the 'change agent' role to review and change the formal curriculum and the policy and structure of the College.

The present study provides a foundation for further research on Service-Learning in post-secondary education. A dynamic model for Service-Learning has been developed. In the model, the student participants, the service experience, the service coordinators/ mentors and the organization (contextual factors) need to be considered.

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Moreover, I am grateful to those staff members involved in Service-Learning projects. They are committed to facilitate quality Service-Learning experiences for students. They had given me much inspiration, insights and rich experiences, to enlighten me in both my thesis and future practice in Service-Learning initiative.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my wife, Brenda. Without continuous emotional support from her, I could not handle the emotional ups and downs throughout the research process. Her concerns for my health energized me to keep good health and patience in facing challenges and difficulties in real life.

Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the thesis has been submitted for any other academic award.

Any views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

The thesis has not been presented to any other University for examination in the United Kingdom or overseas.

SIGNED: _____



DATE: _____

January 2013

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Declaration	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
 Chapter 1 Introduction	
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Statement of problem	3
1.3 Purpose of the study	4
1.4 Significance of the study	4
1.5 Limitations of the study	4
1.6 Outline of chapters	6
 Chapter 2 Setting the Scene: Development of Service-Learning and Post-Secondary Education in Hong Kong	
2.1 Introduction	8
2.2 Education Reform in Hong Kong	9
2.2.1 Background	9
2.2.2 Development of Post-Secondary Education	11
2.2.3 Position of the College in Post-Secondary Education	15
2.3 Characteristics of sub-degree students in Hong Kong	16
2.4 Development of Service-Learning at Different Education Levels	17
2.5 Conclusion	24
 Chapter 3 Literature Review	
3.1 Introduction	25

3.2	Conception of Service-Learning and Service-Learning Programmes	25
3.3	Service Learning as a Form of Experiential Learning	31
3.3.1	David Kolb: Experiential Learning Model	32
3.3.2	David Moore: Contextual Model	36
3.3.3	Cone and Harris: Lens Model	38
3.3.4	Patrick Green: Service-Reflection-Learning Model	40
3.3.5	Scott Seider: Framework Experience Model	44
3.3.6	Experiential Education	45
3.4	Role of Mentor/ Instructor in Service-Learning	46
3.5	Service Learning and Development of Meaning	47
3.6	Benefits of Service-Learning for Students	52
3.7	Conclusion: My Conceptual Framework	52
Chapter 4	Research Design and Methodology	
4.1	Introduction	56
4.2	Epistemology: Constructionism	57
4.3	Research Methodology	59
4.4	Data Collection	62
4.4.1	Participants' Reflective Journals	63
4.4.2	Focus Group	66
4.4.3	Semi-structured Individual Interview	71
4.5	Data Analysis	73
4.6	Selection of Informants	76
4.7	Ethical Issues	77
4.8	Role of the Researcher	81
4.9	Legitimation	82
4.10	Summary of Research Design	87
Chapter 5	Data Presentation and Analysis - Students' Views	
5.1	Introduction	89
5.2	Brief Description of the Student Informants	90
5.2.1	GC, YT, BC, EW and CL (Focus Group)	91
5.2.2	TKY (Individual Interview)	92
5.2.3	DL (Individual Interview)	92
5.2.4	KS (Individual Interview)	93
5.2.5	MT (Individual Interview)	94
5.2.6	PYL (Individual Interview)	94

5.2.7	LS (Individual Interview)	94
5.2.8	Summary of Informants' Profile	94
5.3	Perception of Service-Learning Experience	96
5.3.1	Service-Learning as a New Learning Experience	96
5.3.2	Service-Learning as a Burden to Students	98
5.3.3	Service-Learning as a Choice	99
5.3.4	Service-Learning as Contribution to the College	99
5.4	Student Ownership in Service-Learning	101
5.4.1	Freedom of Choice	101
5.4.2	Pre-service Training	102
5.4.3	Sense of Autonomy	103
5.4.4	Conclusion	104
5.5	Role of Service Coordinator/ Mentor	105
5.5.1	Advisor	105
5.5.2	Coordinator	106
5.5.3	Information Provider	106
5.5.4	Leader	107
5.5.5	Trainer	107
5.6	Benefits of Service-Learning for Students	108
5.6.1	Citizenship Behaviors	108
5.6.2	Interpersonal Development	112
5.6.3	Personal Development	114
5.6.4	Intellectual Development	118
5.6.5	Conclusion	122
5.7	Policy and Structure Issues in Service-Learning Delivery	122
5.7.1	Coordination among Different Parties	122
5.7.2	Staff Involvement	123
5.7.3	Resources Support	125
5.7.4	Platform for Student Development and Reflection	127
5.7.5	Improvement in Curriculum Design	129
5.8	Summary of the Chapter	130
Chapter 6	Data Presentation and Analysis – Staff Members' Views	
6.1	Introduction	133
6.2	Brief Description of the Informants (Staff)	133
6.2.1	AY	133
6.2.2	KKN	134
6.2.3	SNH	134

6.3	Role of Service Coordinator/ Mentor	135
6.3.1	Advisor	135
6.3.2	Coordinator	135
6.3.3	Leader and Trainer	136
6.3.4	Project Manager and Facilitator	136
6.3.5	Conclusion	137
6.4	Benefits of Service-Learning for Students	137
6.4.1	Citizenship Behaviors	137
6.4.2	Interpersonal Development	138
6.4.3	Personal Development	139
6.4.4	Intellectual Development	140
6.5	Policy and Structure Issues in Service-Learning Delivery	141
6.5.1	Readiness of Student Participants	141
6.5.2	Organizational Support on Service-Learning	144
6.5.3	Improvement Measures	149
6.6	Summary of the Chapter	154
Chapter 7	Discussion: Towards a Conceptual Model for Service-Learning Development	
7.1	Introduction	156
7.2	Outcomes of Service-Learning	156
7.3	Role of Service-Learning in Post-Secondary Education in Hong Kong	158
7.3.1	Promoting Students' All-round (Holistic) Development	159
7.3.2	Enhancing the Employability of Graduates	161
7.4	Current Service Delivery Model of Service-Learning	163
7.5	Strategies for Development of Service-Learning in the College	166
7.5.1	Current Phase of Change Process	166
7.5.2	Strategies at College Level	167
7.5.3	Strategies at Programme Level	169
7.5.4	Redefining Role of Service Coordinator/ Mentor	171
7.5.5	Training for Students and Staff Members	173
7.6	Importance of Reflection in Service-Learning	175
7.7	Summary of the Chapter	178
Chapter 8	Summary, Conclusions and Implications	
8.1	Introduction	179
8.2	Reflection on Rationale and Focus of the Study	179

8.3	Review of the Study: Research Questions Addressed	181
8.4	Implications for Service-Learning in Post-Secondary Education	185
8.5	Areas of Further Studies and Limitations of the Present Study	186
8.6	Personal Reflection on My Research Journey	188
References and Bibliography		192
Appendix A.	Student's Reflective Journal	214
Appendix B.	Focus Group Discussion Guide (Students)	217
Appendix C1.	Interviewing Guide for Qualitative Interview (Students)	219
Appendix C2.	Interviewing Guide for Qualitative Interview (Staff)	220
Appendix D.	Coding System for Data Analysis	221
Appendix E1.	Consent Form (Participant's Copy)	225
Appendix E2.	Consent Form (Student Researcher's Copy)	226
Appendix F.	Proposal on Service Learning	227
Appendix G.	Syllabus of GE004 Challenge	232

List of Tables

Table 4.1	Research Strategies for Increasing Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research	87
Table 5.1	Profile of Informants (Students) and their participation in the Data Collection Process	95
Table 6.1	Profile of Informants (Staff) and their participation in the Data Collection Process	134
Table 7.1	Benefits of Service-Learning for Students	156
Table 7.2	Top 10 Most Important Skills and Capabilities When Recruiting New Graduates	162
Table 7.3	Current Service-Learning Delivery Model	163
Table 7.4	Summary of Informants' Views on Improvement Measures for Service-Learning Implementation	165
Table 7.5	Summary of the Roles of Service Coordinator/ Mentor	172
Table 7.6	Overview of Training Programmes for Students and Staff Members	174
Table 7.7	Options for Reflection	177

List of Figures

Figure 3.1	Service and Learning Typology	28
Figure 3.2	Kolb's Experiential Learning Model	32
Figure 3.3	The Lens Model	38
Figure 3.4	Recurring Stages of Student Reflection in a Service-Learning Course Model	42
Figure 3.5	Framework Experiences: Impact of Academic Experiences that led to replacement, modification and specification of Worldview	48
Figure 3.6	Schema of Progressive Internalization	50
Figure 3.7	Conceptual Framework of the Present Study	54
Figure 4.1	Steps in Analyses Employing Thematic Networks	74
Figure 5.1	Conceptual Framework of the Present Study	90
Figure 5.2	Student Ownership in Service-Learning Process	105
Figure 5.3	Revised Framework for Development of Service-Learning	132
Figure 6.1	Revised Framework (2) for Development of Service-Learning	155
Figure 8.1	Dynamic Model for Development of Service-Learning	180

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

This study is an investigation into the application of Service-Learning as an education initiative in a self-financed post-secondary institute of Hong Kong. My concern is not only whether Service-Learning can be applied in Hong Kong, but also how to apply this initiative to facilitate students' learning.

In this chapter, I will present the rationale and background of the study. Academically, the study is part of the requirement in completing the Doctor of Education degree. However, it is also important in practice for developing a framework for Service-Learning in Hong Kong, especially for those students with low academic performance in their post-secondary¹ studies. As a former member of the teaching staff of the institute under examination, I was the Service-Learning Coordinator, promoting Service-Learning for social work students. From this experience, I believe that Service-Learning can enhance students' confidence and capabilities in learning and improve their competitiveness in the job market. This research, therefore, provides me with the opportunity to investigate the extent to which my work in designing and implementing Service-Learning programmes was beneficial to students. In addition, I wanted my research to sustain the implementation of Service-Learning by the College.

Incorporation and implementation of Service-Learning in the Associate Degree in Social Work was part of my job duties in a self-financing post-secondary institution, hereafter referred to as 'the College', during the academic years 2008-2010. The concept of Service-Learning was introduced to the Associate Degree of Social Work

¹ Referring to Education Policy Objectives for Post-secondary Education and the report from University Grants Committee (2010), post-secondary education is defined broadly as the education opportunities for senior secondary school leavers. In this sense, it is referring generally to sub-degree and above qualifications. Whereas, in the University Grants Committee's report, 'Aspirations for the Higher Education System in Hong Kong' (2010), higher education is defined as "a sub-set of post-secondary education, refers generally to degree and above qualifications" (UGC, 2010, p.vi). For consistency in the use of the terms, 'post-secondary education' is used instead of 'higher education'. The term 'higher education' is used with regard to the original source.

programme in the College in 2006 - 2007.

Service-Learning, is commonly defined as a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. (Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse)²

As identified by various scholars and educators, Service-Learning is found to be one of the important ways to integrate students' learning with real life. It also helps the students to strengthen their self-esteem, to motivate their self learning and to develop a sense of social concern and social awareness (Ngai, 2006; Waterman, 1997).

Service-Learning in this context of 'the College' has the following features:

- (1) student-oriented
- (2) participation on a voluntary basis
- (3) involvement of students in planning and delivery of service
- (4) reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action as ways of consolidation and integration of learning experience

The study attempts to examine the students' perceptions of the extent to which Service-Learning has benefited them in learning, in developing self confidence and in self understanding. The students are characterized by their relatively low self-esteem, lack of motivation, lack of a sense of mission and being under economic constraints.

In addition, the contextual factors affecting the students' involvement and performance in Service-Learning and the transfer of the learning process were also examined. A practice model for Service-Learning was devised as one of the end products of the research.

² Adapted from the website, Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (date unknown):

<http://www.servicelearning.org/what-service-learning>

1.2 Statement of Problem

While the concept of Service-Learning has been implemented and found as an effective mode of learning in the United States of America (USA) for years (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Vogelgesand & Astin, 2000; Eyler, 2002; Moely et al, 2002a; Eyler et al, 2003; Gallini & Moely, 2003; Green, 2006; Simons & Clearly, 2006), the application of Service-Learning in Hong Kong is just at a beginning stage (Chan et al, 2003; Chen, 2010). Various attempts are being made in incorporating this initiative into formal educational systems (from primary to post-secondary education). Detailed discussion will be found in Chapter 2.

There are still many unresolved issues in Service-Learning such as how to best design and implement it to encourage learning through reflection-in-action; the nature of the learning that appears to be taking place; the generalization of results and the development of Service-Learning theory (Bringle & Hatcher, 2005).

The present study has been designed to address identified research questions associated with the operation and outcomes of Service-Learning:

- (1) What benefits, if any, do students derive from their Service-Learning experiences?
- (2) Are particular types of students more or less likely to benefit from Service-Learning?
- (3) In the construction of an ideal Service-Learning environment for the enhancement of learning, what factors should be taken into account?
- (4) How should Service-Learning be formulated to enhance students' learning and integration of experience? What model would be most suitable/appropriate to the students in this local context?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Based on the research questions outlined as above, the purposes of the present study are:

- (1) to examine the implementation of Service-Learning in the institution under examination;
- (2) to examine the benefits and impact of Service-Learning as an educational initiative to students; and
- (3) to recommend a practice model for the further development of Service-Learning in the institution.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is not an evaluative one, that is its intention is not to assess and measure the effectiveness of Service-Learning in the institution, but it provides a platform for those staff members and students involved in Service-Learning projects to express their feelings and viewpoints on the issue.

Based on the data obtained, it is my hope that the study will help the senior management to formulate or refine strategies and policies in developing the Service-Learning in the institution.

Academically, it will examine the conception and operation of Service-Learning in the local (Hong Kong) context, thus contributing to the theory building of Service-Learning theory in that context.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

The focus is on one of the self-financed post-secondary education institutes in Hong Kong. The characteristics of the students in a self-financed education institute might

be different from that of publicly financed institutions. For example, the overall academic performance of the latter seems to be better than that of the former. Moreover, the institution under examination is not a well-developed institution, the academic programmes, facilities and support could not be comparable to well-developed post-secondary education institutes. All of these factors mean that the findings are highly specific to this particular context and population, uncovering the interaction of significant factors characteristic of that phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). I am not going to examine the whole picture of Service-Learning development in post-secondary education in Hong Kong and my findings, therefore, may not be able to be applied to other post-secondary education institutions there. On the other hand, given the methodological approach that I have taken, I hope that readers will be able to reflect on my research and see its relevance for them should they work in similar contexts.

In addition, owing to constraints in time and resources, my study could not involve all of the stakeholders concerned with the topic under examination. For example, it would also be useful to examine the viewpoints of the senior management of the institution, the viewpoints of the parents (of students involved in Service-Learning), the non-participants of Service-Learning and the service users of the Service-Learning projects.

I applied a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative interviews, focus group and reflective journals were employed as the data collection methods. In making the decision to use qualitative research, I aimed at collecting and analyzing the informants' opinions and responses in depth, rather than collecting a mass of quantified data for analysis. Under this hermeneutic paradigm, a rich description of the Service-Learning phenomenon was found.

Finally, the study was, to some extent, limited by my own bias and interpretation for "the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis" (Merriam, 1998, p.42). Being a former teaching staff member and coordinator of the Service-Learning projects meant that I had a vested interest in the programmes' success and a mixture of relationships with the student participants from mentor, instructor to friends. The knowledge gained from my study is thus more concrete, more

contextual and more “developed by reader-interpretation – readers bring to a case study their own experience and understanding, which lead to generalizations when new data for the case are added to old data” (Merriam, 1998, p.32).

1.6 Outline of Chapters

This dissertation is composed of nine chapters. The first chapter outlines the research questions and the background of the study.

In Chapter 2, the development of the education system in Hong Kong in recent years is presented and discussed. Service-Learning, as one of the educational initiatives in meeting the needs of post-secondary students is also examined. This sets the scene of the study.

In Chapter 3, I examine the world of the theory of Service-Learning with a focus on various models of Service-Learning and Experiential Learning in some western countries and Hong Kong. After the different models of experiential education and Service-Learning are examined, a conceptual framework for the present study is proposed.

In Chapter 4, I address the design and methodology of the study. Theoretical discussion on the research design and epistemology underlying the study are examined. The rationale for using qualitative research methodology and various data collection methods is discussed.

In Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, the data collected from the informants (i.e. students and staff members involved in Service-Learning) are displayed and analyzed. These data provide a basis for developing the theoretical framework and practice model as proposed in Chapter 7.

In Chapter 8, the study is re-examined and the research findings, limitations and implications are re-stated. A personal reflection on the whole research process and my learning throughout designing and implementing the research and writing this dissertation is included in this chapter. The road to examining my research topic is in

fact a road to self-understanding. My feelings and thinking during the research process are reflected upon and self-questioned throughout to illustrate how the whole process of research was meaningful to me in my dual roles as an instructor and a student in my academic life.

Chapter 2 Setting the Scene: Development of Service-Learning and Post-Secondary Education in Hong Kong

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will first examine the issues in education reform in Hong Kong over the past ten years. This education reform has led to change in the quantity (the number of school placements at different levels of education) and diversity of education opportunities (Education Commission, 2000, p.46).

As stated by Cheng (2001), the reform is analyzed as:

the third wave of Hong Kong education reforms. It needs to build up a high level intelligent platform for educational practices at both school and system levels and to move towards triplization including globalization, localization, and individualization with aims to optimize the development of contextualized multiple intelligences of each student for the future in the new millennium (Cheng, 2001, p.1).

I will focus on examining the characteristics of students of post-secondary education resulting from the education reform. Instead of focusing on the 'elite' population, as in the past, it seems that more focus and opportunities are given to the 'ordinary' or 'under-achieved' population. Different teaching and learning approaches for this target population should be applied. One of the alternative ways of nurturing students is identified as Service-Learning. My study examines the impact of the development of Service-Learning in Hong Kong to students in a self-financed post-secondary education institute.

2.2 Education Reform in Hong Kong

2.2.1 Background

Hong Kong's education reform started in early 1988, with an education review conducted by the Education Commission. The Education Commission submitted to the Government the 'Reform Proposal for the Education System in Hong Kong' in September 2000. In his Policy Address 2000, the Chief Executive endorsed the recommendations made by the Education Commission for reforming the education system. The scope of the reform covers the curricula, the assessment mechanisms as well as the admission systems for different stages of education. The Government published a timetable for implementing the reform measures.

The implementation of the planned measures are continuing to progress. In the fourth Progress Report (Education Commission, 2006), the eight UGC-funded institutions announced on 5 July 2006 the general entrance requirements and programme specific requirements for admission to undergraduate programmes starting from the 2012/13 school year under the new senior secondary (NSS) and post-secondary education academic structure. On the other hand, post-secondary education opportunities are available to 66% of the relevant age cohort in the 2005/06 school year.

The rationale for the education reform is based on the dynamic nature of Hong Kong's society in responding to the ever-changing global environment. In the simplest terms, the world is undergoing fundamental economic, technological, social and cultural changes. As an international city, Hong Kong is experiencing the same changes.

Education holds the key to the all-round development of a person and prepares him/her for work and life. Education nurtures talents for society and promotes its prosperity and progress (Education Commission, 2000). In an ever-changing society, it is imperative that Hong Kong's education system keeps pace with the times and is responsive to the needs of learners. The education reform seeks to update and upgrade the students' competences in adaptability, creativity and abilities for

communication, self-learning, cooperation and develop students' character, emotional qualities, horizons and learning in achieving excellence.

As proposed by the Education Commission (2000), the overall aims of education for the 21st Century should be:

To enable every person to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics according to his/ her own attributes so that he/ she is capable of life-long learning, critical and ..exploratory thinking, innovating and adapting to change; filled with self-confidence and a team spirit; willing to put forward continuing effort for the prosperity, progress, freedom and democracy of their society, and contribute to the future well-being of the nation and the world at large. (Education Commission, 2000, p.4)

The vision of education reform is (Education Commission, 2000, p.5) :

1. **To build a lifelong learning society:** to develop Hong Kong into a society that values lifelong learning, so that everyone enjoys learning, has the attitude and ability for lifelong learning, and has access to diverse channels and opportunities for learning.
2. **To raise the overall quality of students:** to improve the overall quality of our society through upgrading the knowledge, ability and attitude of all students.
3. **To construct a diverse school system:** to inject diversity in education ideologies, modes of financing and focus of curriculum, so that learners have more choices and multi-faceted talents will be nurtured.
4. **To create an inspiring learning environment:** to build a learning environment that is inspiring and conducive to the creative and exploratory spirit.

5. **To acknowledge the importance of moral education:** to provide students with structured learning experiences in the areas of moral, emotional and spiritual education.
6. **To develop an education system that is rich in tradition but cosmopolitan and culturally diverse:** to help students develop an international outlook so that they can learn, work and live in different cultural environments.

From the above, I suggest that the overall impact of the education reform will ultimately lead to a new culture of learning and teaching. The traditional approach in emphasizing the academic performance ('elite approach') of the students will change to emphasizing a more holistic development of the students ('student-centered approach').

2.2.2 Development of Post-Secondary Education

There are over 100,000 students (127,162 in 2010) taking the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) each year (HKEAA, 2012). There are 14,620 places in the 8 funded universities for the cohort 2011-2012 (UGC, 2012) of Hong Kong and about 18.5% of the 17-20 age group (2006 By-census) succeed to get a university place. Over 80% of the 17-20 age group either enter the employment market or seek alternate routes of non-UGC funded programmes for further study at post-secondary level.

In early 2000, the Hong Kong Government started to implement the expansion of post-secondary education. In his Policy Address 2000, Mr. Tung Chee-hwa, the chief executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), announced that "Our objective is that within ten years (from 2001), 60% of our senior secondary school leavers will receive tertiary (post-secondary) education." (Hong Kong Government, 2000, para.66).

In achieving this target, the Government will facilitate tertiary (post-secondary) institutions, private enterprises and other organizations to provide options other than the traditional sixth form education, such as professional diploma courses and sub-degree courses. We will consult these organizations, examine the demand and allocate more resources by providing land and one-off loans to those institutions interested in offering such courses. We will further extend the scope of assistance offered to students by the Non-means Tested Loan Scheme and low-interest loan scheme, and will offer fee remission to the most needy students. We need to build a flexible higher (post-secondary) education system that offers various channels and different modes of learning, so that everyone can pursue continuing education at different stages of life. (Hong Kong Government, 2000, para.67).

The result of the above was an expansion of the number of places in the post-secondary education sector. This practice is also in line with the education reform proposal.

In the education reform proposal (Education Commission, 2000), a diversified higher (post-secondary) education system is being developed which contains the following features (Education Commission, 2000, pp.111-112):

- (i) **Student-focused:** Students can choose learning modes and channels according to their abilities and needs, rather than being determined by teachers' arrangements or administrative convenience of the institutions.
- (ii) **Flexible academic structure:** There should be a flexible academic structure in higher (post-secondary) education to facilitate the individual development of students and cater for the ever-changing needs of society.
- (iii) **A transferable credit unit and qualification system:** The Education Commission considers it necessary to encourage tertiary (post-secondary) institutions to work towards a transferable credit unit and qualification system

among themselves so that credit units and qualifications acquired by students in different institutions will be duly recognized.

(iv) **Diversity:** The Education Commission considers that tertiary (post-secondary) institutions should build on and develop their strengths into areas of excellence. Apart from focusing on academic studies, some of the institutions may focus more on employment-related education or students' development in other areas. By promoting diversity in the mode of education and participation of different sectors, Hong Kong's higher (post-secondary) education system will become more flexible and diversified.

(v) **Multiple entry and exit points:** Allow students to join, suspend or continue their higher (post-secondary) education studies at any stage in their life according to their own needs and circumstances. The credits they have accumulated from completed learning units will be duly recognized when they resume relevant studies in future.

The above features are attempting to achieve the aims and objectives of higher (post-secondary) education which are refined as:

Aims

To consolidate students' abilities and attitudes for life-long learning, and to nurture people who have confidence, a sense of justice and social responsibility and a global outlook.

Objectives

1. To develop students' independent and critical thinking, creativity and ability to learn independently and to explore, in preparation for the mastering of knowledge in a certain discipline;

2. To foster in students an aspiration for self-improvement, a positive attitude towards life and a commitment to their families, their society and their country; and
3. To enhance students' ability to learn, live and work in a diverse social and cross-cultural environment (Education Commission, 2000, p.33).

In responding to the above aims and objectives, a variety of measures have been taken up by the educational institutes in Hong Kong. For example, outcome-based teaching and learning³, problem-based learning⁴, etc. One of the ways to improve and enhance students' ability to learn and relate themselves to social and cultural diversity is Service-Learning.

In fulfilling the objectives of the education reform proposal (Education Commission, 2000), a review of higher education has been conducted. The Report of the Higher Education Review 2002 suggested that the University Grants Committee (UGC) conduct a further review of the sector, and the UGC took this up in 2009. In addition to assessing the implementation of the 2002 Review which focused principally on the UGC sector, the 2010 Review, with the Government's agreement, was expanded to cover the entire post-secondary education sector.

In December 2010, the University Grants Committee submitted to the Hong Kong Government its report 'Aspirations for the Higher Education System in Hong Kong'. Since 2000, the Government's policy in encouraging private provision of post-secondary education, while continuing its support for the UGC sector, has resulted in a flourishing post-secondary education sector in Hong Kong where more students than before have the opportunity to pursue further education after secondary school.

The aim of the post-secondary education review is to examine the post-secondary sector in Hong Kong with a view to offering recommendations on appropriate strategies for the future development of the sector which has seen considerable

³ University of Hong Kong <http://www.cetl.hku.hk/outcomes-based-approaches-student-learning>
City University of Hong Kong <http://www.cb.cityu.edu.hk/ef/obtl/>

Lingnan University <http://study.ln.edu.hk/tlc/content/outcome-based-approaches-tl-obatl>

⁴ University of Hong Kong <http://www0.hku.hk/earthsci/pbl/news.htm>

expansion over the past few years. The expansion experienced by the sector is encouraging, brought on as a result of Government's initiative to meet changes in socio-economic needs and community aspirations. However, the expansion over a period of time has also resulted in a fragmented and complex post-secondary education system with a degree of incoherence and duplication. While diversity is a positive attribute, fragmentation is not.

The UGC is convinced that Hong Kong needs a more integrated post-secondary education system that can provide clear progression pathways for students, and at the same time, ensure coherence and consistency in policies and the best use of resources. Given the very large amount of public and private resources devoted to the sector, it is necessary to assess whether the present post-secondary system is fit for its purpose and capable of producing responsible individuals as future active participants in the society. It is suggested that the post-secondary system has to emphasize the ways in which this system could strengthen Hong Kong's ability to maintain its role in the globalised world and make its own specific contribution to the development of Mainland China.

2.2.3 Position of the College in Post-Secondary Education

Students and staff involved in Service-Learning Projects of the College are the target informants in my study. In this section, I provide an overview of the College.

The College as an education institute, has committed itself to the provision of quality educational services in Hong Kong since 1957, starting with primary education and craft training for working adults at the time when people in Hong Kong had very limited opportunity for education.

Before 2000, the educational programmes offered by the College were mainly vocational training programmes and short courses. After 2000, in responding to the development of post-secondary education scheduled by the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, Tung Chee Hwa and the Education Commission for a quest for diversity (funded universities and private post-secondary education institutions) and quantity (increase in post-secondary learning opportunities), the College started to deliver

educational programmes at post-secondary level (diplomas and higher diplomas at Hong Kong Qualifications Framework⁵ level 2 and above).

Apart from competing with other well-established post-secondary education institutes in Hong Kong, the major target groups of the College's educational programmes are those 'academically low achievers'⁶ (ALAs).

The College has developed a network of collaborations with overseas universities to deliver top-up bachelor and higher degree programmes for her graduates. This will provide the academic ladder for the students for further studies.

The development of post-secondary education in the College seemed to be quite smooth. In 2001, the first Higher Diploma programme (HD) was accredited by HKCAA⁷. In 2005, the Associate Diploma programme (AD) passed the accreditation by Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ).

At present, the College provides more than 100 education programmes ranging from HKQF level 2 to level 5.

2.3 Characteristics of Sub-degree Students in Hong Kong

Under the expansion of post-secondary education opportunities, students of the 17-20 age group have more opportunities to receive further education. However, students who perform less well in the public examinations experience difficulty in further education and employment and sometimes feel stigmatized. According to my teaching experience, I have observed that they easily generate a negative self-image and low self efficacy, a lower sense of hope and feel less privileged in planning their

⁵ HKQF is a comprehensive and voluntary network of learning pathways developed and enhanced by the Education Bureau of Hong Kong. It aims at facilitating articulation among academic, vocational and continuing education. <http://www.hkqf.gov.hk/txt/HKQF.asp>

⁶ The term 'academically low achievers' are used by Education Bureau of Hong Kong to describe those students with low academic achievement.

⁷ Hong Kong Council of Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) is now replaced by The Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) under the HKCAAVQ Ordinance (Chapter 1150) which came into effect on 1 October 2007.

future. They are not clear of the future and have no confidence in themselves. Such students usually consider themselves as 'under-achievers' in the present education system. They have poor academic self-concept and low attainment value in learning (Lau & Chan, 2001). In other words, there is an increasing number of self-perceived under-achievers who gradually progress to post-secondary education. Additional learning support and extended opportunities are deemed necessary for this group of young people to grow and develop.

Furthermore, teaching staff in post-secondary education also need the knowledge and skills in teaching and facilitating students of this kind. As stated in the Reform Proposal (Education Commission, 2000), the professionalism of teachers needs to be enhanced. Supportive measures have been taken accordingly. Scattered attempts have been made in the College by introducing elements of personal development and voluntary service in some of the programmes. For example, in the Associate Degree of Social Work, the 'Service-Learning Project' has been introduced to meet the students' specific learning needs.

According to the Reform Proposal,

Higher (Post-Secondary) education should therefore provide students with *learning experiences in multiple disciplines*, help them develop *broad-based knowledge and vision*, as well as enhance their problem-solving power and adaptability. (Education Commission, 2000, p.111),

From this perspective, it is found that systematic and wider structured learning opportunities for all the students of higher diploma or associate degree are preferable to a more narrow academic curriculum.

2.4 Development of Service-Learning at Different Education Levels

Service-Learning, which combines academic study with community service, is ideally suited to achieving both the personal and academic goals of students and the broader goals of civic responsibility and social justice (Ngai, 2006). There is

evidence of benefits for undergraduates in local universities from Service-Learning in various levels and aspects (OSL Lingnan University, 2006; Ngai, 2006; Chan et al, 2009).

Young people from disadvantaged circumstances benefit from participation in quality Service-Learning in a number of different ways, including the following (Roehlkepartain, 2007):

- They tend to have a greater commitment to learning and better school attendance, grades, and academic success than low-income students who do not participate.
- They tend to be more likely to believe they are contributing to the community, to be engaged in learning, and other positive outcomes.
- They tend to demonstrate more positive civic attitudes and behaviors than their peers who do not volunteer.

Guided by Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984), a Service-Learning project will provide students with a range of learning opportunities to 'experience' and 'integrate' their learning through different 'potential learning pathways'. Through participation in different service contexts under the guidance of course instructors and agencies, students are enabled to develop positive attitudes and skills and to integrate their knowledge. Subsequently, students could expand their "life horizon" and gain achievements in the process.

In Service-Learning, not only the service recipients benefit, the students also have positive changes in the following areas: increased self-esteem (Howard-Hamilton, 2000; Rockquemore & Shaffer, 2000; Root et al, 2002), better academic performance (Astin et al, 2000; Eyler, 2002; Vogelgesand & Astin, 2000; Chan et al, 2003; Green, 2006), growth in civic pride, engagement and sense of responsibility (Eyler et al, 2003; Gallini & Moely, 2003; Moely et al, 2002a; Simons & Clearly, 2006) and increased personal skills (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Chan et al, 2003; Eyler et al, 2003; Moely et al, 2002a).

Benjamin (1989), in his examination of the educational futurists' ideas for those who are searching for a substantive philosophy to guide education in the coming years, suggested that Service-Learning is a "way to allow interaction with community adults and other youth, to introduce students to agencies and institutions within their local communities, to help youth gain a service ethic that will check tendencies toward unbridled self-interest" (p.9). There is a trend that students should link their learning with the community. From such community service experience, students become more mature, more nurturing and more able to integrate their learning into practice in their daily life.

In examining the literature on Service-Learning, we find that this model of educational practice would enable students in the following ways: (Waterman, 1997)

1. to facilitate students' learning in classrooms
2. to facilitate personal development
3. to develop a sense of social consciousness and responsibilities
4. to contribute to the community

From the above, we could conclude that Service-Learning would benefit the students in different aspects. However, different Service-Learning models have been identified and developed in different organizational and cultural contexts and we should choose among different models to 'fit' and 'meet' the students' particular needs. Furthermore, in order to localize and consolidate the experience of implementing Service-Learning, an evidence-based approach to examine the students' perception on Service-Learning would help to ensure the effects of Service-Learning on students.

Service-Learning programmes in some western contexts such as the USA are varied and extensive, offering opportunities to students in post-secondary education as well as to high school students. Currently, there is a growing interest in Service-Learning in Asia with programmes operating in colleges and universities in the Philippines, Tai Wan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea, India, Thailand and Japan (Amity Foundation, 2010; Xing & Ma, 2010).

In reviewing selected theories in learning and development, Permaul (2009) developed an integrated Service-Learning conceptual model. He argued that “although existing theories contribute extensively to understanding service-learning, they are studies, based on research conducted in the USA. Do students from Asia-Pacific Region have similar characteristics and attributes as their American counterpart? Would similar studies using samples of students and programmes from another part of the world yield similar results?” (Permaul, 2009, p.7) Permaul’s questions are consistent with the central idea in the present study.

In Hong Kong, Service-Learning is at the beginning stage. A number of Service-Learning programmes have been organized with the collaboration of social service organizations with primary and secondary schools, but the concept is relatively new to universities on the Mainland. A tradition of community service does exist among colleges and universities in Mainland China, but the critical link between these activities and classroom learning has yet to be formed.

Service-Learning has been promoted with the establishment of the Community Youth Club in the 1970s, however ever since it has been regarded as a kind of extra-curricular activity. This changed in 2000 when Community Service became one of the five essential learning experiences in the school curriculum (Education Bureau, 2007).

Chung Chi College began its Service-Learning programme on 2000 and it is run from the General Education office of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Students take Service-Learning as part of General Education at Chung Chi College. Service-Learning is organized as an independent or stand alone series of classes. Currently, each final year student in the College has the choice to do Service-Learning as the final project required of all of them (McCarthy, 2009).

Lingnan University is Hong Kong's first university to set up a Service-Learning Office to implement Service-Learning programmes. Lingnan is perhaps the first institution to formalize Service-Learning in its curriculum in Hong Kong (Chan et al., 2009). Service-Learning programmes in Lingnan University are unique because

they require students to demonstrate academic rigor while contributing to the community through service, thereby fulfilling the University's motto of 'Education for Service'. Through participation in such programmes, students further develop their ability to think critically, while strengthening their leadership skills and self-confidence.

According to Chan et al. (2009), Service-Learning reflects a whole-person approach to education. It is designed to provide students with a valuable educational tool, while at the same time delivering a meaningful service to individuals and organizations in the community.

The academic components of the Service-Learning programmes are designed by academic staff in consideration of the community-service elements offered by partners arranged by the University's Office of Service-Learning (OSL). Since its establishment in 2006, OSL has been actively collaborating with various major corporations and charitable organizations in Hong Kong. The OSL's activities have included producing a Service-Learning manual and launching a summer course on 'Community Engagement through Service-Learning'.

In September 2002 Lingnan University launched a pilot programme to explore the implications of Service-Learning programmes for university students in the region. In this programme a small group of students, the so-called 'Lingnan Angels', provided self-designed after-school services to ethnic minority children in rural areas in Hong Kong's New Territories.

In partnership with the Students' Service Center (SSC) further programmes started, including Project X, Lingnan Off-campus Volunteers' Experiences (LOVE) Project, Lingnan Angels and Research Internship programme. In 2004 Lingnan University began implanting Service-Learning components across its curriculum. A new Service-Learning and Research Scheme (SLRS) was designed to aid the development of 3 distinctive programmes.

The specific objectives of the SLRS are to help students to: (1) understand the real environment and situation of the local community; (2) experience the spirit of

mutual help and develop a sense of commitment to community; (3) enhance problem-solving communication and organizational skills, and social competence and (4) apply classroom knowledge to the community. (Chan et al., 2009)

In May 2006 the Office of Service-Learning was set up to further develop the concept of Service-Learning into curricula amongst institutions in Hong Kong, expand the different themes of programmes, and to link university and community.

In 2010, Lingnan students have served over 100 organizations (government, non-profit, schools and corporate firms) and registered 70,000 service hours for the needy, elderly, youth, patients, and single-parent families (Xing & Ma, 2010).

Similarly, other universities in Hong Kong have attempted to develop their own model of Service-Learning in recent years. Diversification of approaches in conducting Service-Learning will provide opportunities for the development of this education model.

Aiming at fostering students' professional excellence through building their total learning experience for whole person development, students of Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) are required to engage in serving the community through involvement in Service-Learning projects (HKIEd, 2007). Service-learning projects in HKIEd are organized by its Student Affairs Office (SAO).

Students of HKIEd can participate in various service-learning projects. For example, long-term service projects groups and/or service-learning opportunities offered by external community service organizations on a voluntary basis. In addition, course-related Service-Learning projects are provided. In these projects, academic departments collaborate with SAO staff to launch service-learning projects and students' participation in service-learning projects is a requirement for the completion of a course module (Lai, 2010).

Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) has developed a service-learning programme named Community-based Instruction (CBI) Programme. The CBI programme lasted for five years (from September 2002 to July 2007) and was

funded by the University Grants Committee (UGC) of Hong Kong.

The CBI programme was developed in response to a broad call for teaching development proposals from UGC. The CBI programme team defined CBI as “any instructional practices that are situated in the real-life experience of the Hong Kong community and which can also contribute to the enhancement of that community as an outcome of using those instructional practices” (Powers, 2009, pp.73-74). In this sense, two components of CBI are identified: service-learning and problem-based learning. The goal of the project was to enhance HKBU’s whole person education by engaging students in understanding how their respective areas of expertise may be applied to developing solutions to a community’s problems and how those solutions might be implemented through actual practice on their part.

The CBI programme was characterized by its adequate funding support, two full time staff were hired to conduct operations. In addition, the approach to service-learning taken during the CBI programme was to have one or more service-oriented elements included as assignments within a regular class. Thus, students, faculty academic staff and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were involved (Powers, 2009). The CBI programme at HKBU has now become a part of the university’s Centre for Holistic Teaching and Learning.

The Higher Education Service-Learning Network was developed in 2009. The representatives from various post-secondary education institutes of Hong Kong joined the network. Members included: Lingnan University, City University of Hong Kong, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong Shue Yan University, University of Hong Kong & Hong Kong College of Technology. The main aim of the Network is providing a platform for sharing and discussing the further development of Service-Learning in post-secondary education. Joint ventures in evaluating and monitoring of Service-Learning are made possible.

2.5 Conclusion

The education reform in Hong Kong will lead to the change in teaching and learning culture. With the expansion in post-secondary education, the profile of the students studying in post-secondary education will continue to shift from 'elite population' to 'mass population'. As a result, the application of new teaching and learning strategies will become more and more important to achieve the overall aims and objectives of the education reform.

According to international experience, Service-Learning is found to be one of the strategies that will enhance students' learning and personal development in various aspects. It is valuable to investigate the impact of such an approach to students of post-secondary education.

In this research project, I investigate both the impact of and students' experience in participating in Service-Learning programmes. This research area is new in the academic culture in Hong Kong. Local studies in Service-Learning have usually applied survey methods to examine the benefits for the participants but seldom attempted to develop a so-called "Theory of Service-Learning". In my research study, a qualitative approach is applied, so that students' perceptions on their own Service-Learning experience are examined in depth.

In the following chapters, I will present my journey of this investigation process and share my experience and findings of my research study.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to generate a conceptual framework that underpins the understanding of participants' (students involved in Service-Learning) experience of Service-Learning programmes in the context of a self-financed post-secondary education institute. The chapter will be developed by examining the literature on Service-Learning and my reflection on my work as a Service-Learning Coordinator in previous years.

For many years, Service-Learning practitioners drew on the work of Dewey, Kolb and Freire for theoretical support for their work. In more recent years, Cone and Harris (1996) have taken the discussion of 'best practice' models in Service-Learning to another level and have provided helpful constructs to assist this. Youniss and Yates (1997) have made an important contribution to the discussion through their work on ideology and the importance of Service-Learning in the context of a strong ideological base. Jarvis (2004) and Le Cornu (2006), while not specifically addressing Service-Learning, have contributed to the discussion about the role of reflection in experiential based learning.

3.2 Conception of Service-Learning and Service-Learning Programmes

My study is focused on exploring the impact of Service-Learning on the participants and how the participants learn in the service context. In examining the conception of Service-Learning, it is important to clarify and define the nature and scope of Service-Learning and Service-Learning programme in the context under exploration.

There is no single definition of Service-Learning that is used in practice. Like many other concepts applied in the social science and education fields, different writers and authors define Service-Learning in different ways, with a focus on different aspects of the concept. Defining Service-Learning presents a challenge due to the broad range of experiences known as Service-Learning, as well as the variable ways

to interpret two complex processes such as service and learning (Stanton et al., 1999; Furco, 2003). In 1996, Jacoby found more than 200 definitions in the Service-Learning literature (Jacoby, 1996). Below are some definitions and descriptions of Service-Learning intended to provide understanding of the pedagogy in USA context.

Service-Learning is:

a method under which students learn and develop through active participation in... thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs, that are integrated into the students' academic curriculum or provide structured time for reflection and that enhance what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community (Corporation for National Service (USA), 1990, p.5).

Service-Learning has been defined as:

both a programme type and a philosophy of education. As a programme type, Service-Learning includes myriad ways that students can perform meaningful service to their communities and to society while engaging in some form of reflection or study that is related to the service. As a philosophy of education, Service-Learning reflects the beliefs that education must be linked to social responsibility and that the most effective learning is active and connected to experience in some way (Giles, et al., 1991, p.7).

Service-Learning means a method under which students learn and develop through thoughtfully organized service that: is conducted in and meets the needs of a community and is coordinated with an institution of higher education, and with the community; helps foster civic responsibility; is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students enrolled; and includes structured time for students to reflect on the service experience. (American Association for Higher Education: Series on Service-Learning to the Disciplines, adapted from the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993)

Service-Learning is defined as:

a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of Service-Learning (Jacoby, 1996, p.5).

Service-Learning is a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of the course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. Unlike extracurricular volunteer service, Service-Learning is a course-based service experience that produces the best outcomes when meaningful service activities are related to the material through reflection in activities such as directed writings, small group discussions, and class presentations. (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996, p.222)

Service-Learning is:

a teaching methodology that combines community-service with explicit academic learning objectives, preparation and reflection. Students provide community service but learn about the context in which it is provided, the connection between the service and their academic coursework, and their roles as citizens (Rieke, Seifer & Connors, 2000).

Jacoby's (1996) definition provides a helpful summary of the key features of Service-Learning. First, Service-Learning is experiential in nature – students go out into the community and actually do something. Second, the goal of Service-Learning is to 'address human and community needs' – students are not just doing anything, but they are doing something to improve their communities. Third, and this is an important point that distinguishes Service-Learning from traditional community service, Service-Learning involves intentional efforts to promote student learning in

conjunction with the service activity. Often this is done through structured reflection opportunities where students, individually or as a group, think through the activity in which they are engaging, the impact (or lack thereof) they are able to have in the community, their own reactions to and feelings about the service activity, and the larger social issues related to the activity. Finally, reciprocity – the idea that both students and the community benefit from the activity – is a key focus of Service-Learning.

Recently, Sigmon (1996) attempted to provide a more precise definition of Service-Learning through a typology that compares different programmes that combine service and learning. This typology broadened his earlier ‘reciprocal learning’ definition to include the notion that ‘Service-Learning’ occurs when there is a balance between learning goals and service outcomes. (Figure 3.1)

Figure 3.1 : Service and Learning Typology⁸

Service-Learning	Learning goals primary; service outcomes secondary
Service-Learning	Service outcomes primary; learning goals secondary
Service-Learning	Service and learning goals completely separate
SERVICE-LEARNING	Service and learning goals of equal weight and each enhances the other for all participants

Seifer & Connors (2007) provided a picture in defining Service-Learning which illustrate its key elements:

Service-Learning is a form of experiential education that:

- is developed, implemented, and evaluated in collaboration with the community;
- responds to community-identified concerns;
- attempts to balance the service that is provided and the learning that takes place;
- enhances the curriculum by extending learning beyond the classroom and

⁸ Adapted from Sigmon (1996).

- allowing students to apply what they've learned to real-world situations; and
- provides opportunities for critical reflection. (Seifer & Connors, 2007, p.9)

Berry & Chisholm (1999), based on the linkage between the Service-Learning programme and the nature of the course, identified five Service-Learning models in post-secondary education around the world: (pp.43-51)

1. **Career Related:** Universities are taking up Service-Learning as a means for students to fulfill practical requirements in professional studies like business, social work, education, medicine, law, journalism etc. In Service-Learning, the focus is shifted to question how the community or agency benefited by the student's presence and activity.
2. **Discipline Related:** Teachers are introducing Service-Learning as an important and clearly distinct method of learning skills of disciplines like natural sciences, political science, sociology, archaeology, ethnography, anthropology, linguistics, philosophy, religion, arts etc.
3. **Course or Module Related:** In this model, service and learning are linked through tying the service to one of the courses or modules. There are two variations in this model: (1) Single Course/ Existing Disciplines, where service may be assigned to all members of a class or may be an optional addition to traditional classroom-based study. By performing service and writing a paper analyzing the issues and experiences in the agency, students selecting this option often earn additional credit. (2) Single Course/ Created Study, whereby studies are developed particularly designed for the service experience. These may be related closely to existing and accepted disciplines, or involve multi- or inter-disciplinary content and methodologies. They may be rooted in a particular academic department or may be inter-departmental.
4. **The Cohesive Curriculum Model:** In this model, two or more disciplines or professional tracks are brought together around a service opportunity.

Requiring a team of teachers from different fields, these Service-Learning programmes demonstrate collaborative teaching and learning and the need for a coordinated approach to problems. In another variation of the cohesive curriculum, the service may be a group project with students in the group approaching the learning and service from several different disciplines or career training tracks. In this model, they share their varying approaches through the work they are doing together.

5. **Non-Credited but Part of the Learning Expectations:** Volunteer service as an extra-curricular activity has long been a part of the life of many universities and colleges around the world. In this model, institutions which have such a strong system of values that students enter with expectations that acquiring these values will be as much a part of their learning as will formal, classroom and credited learning. Service in institutions strongly identified with a clear mission and set of values is recognized as integral to its teaching and learning whether or not it is credited.

In Hong Kong, different models for Service-Learning delivery are identified and developed (Toisuta, 2005):

- (1) **'Stand-alone' Model:** Volunteers providing professional service to the community. Some specific characteristics are:
 - Students give voluntary service in the community where the primary emphasis is service
 - Application of knowledge, skills and expertise to benefit the community in a manner consistent with the mission of the university
 - Students are recruited, prepared prior to service, supervised during the service, and evaluated post-service and obtain academic credit
 - Being involved in practical experience, students gain deeper understanding of different segments of society (especially the disadvantaged), broadening their horizons and facilitating their personal growth

- (2) **Service-Learning as Liberal-arts education (with an interdisciplinary approach):** The experiential nature and interdisciplinary approach in liberal arts education should make this model become solid for the purpose of nurturing students to develop a sense of justice and capacity building for leadership.
- (3) **Service-Learning as part of course planning and implementation or independent department programme:** There exists a wide-range of approaches from Service-Learning from independent department programmes to incorporating Service-Learning into existing courses, or, to offer Service-Learning as a separate course.

In examining the above definition and delivery models of Service-Learning, we could get an impression that the conception of Service-Learning is still in the developing stage. Different institutes (or universities) try to incorporate Service-Learning in different ways to enhance students' learning. In the next section, we will examine how Service-Learning enhances students' learning. Different theoretical models are discussed in order to formulate my conceptual framework for the present study.

3.3 Service-Learning as a Form of Experiential Learning

Service-Learning without a critical dimension may produce temporary emotional euphoria in contrast to more reflective approaches resulting in longer term attitudinal change. Without critical reflection, Service-Learning may well act to reinforce prior stereotypes and unhealthy attitudes (Cone & Harris, 1996; Kahne & Westheimer, 1996; Rhoads, 1997; Taylor, 2000). The challenge for Service-Learning practitioners is to generate learning experiences that become the catalyst for shifts in values and consciousness, both in the educational process and in the society that schools serve.

We believe that Service-Learning needs to consider the personal and intellectual growth of both the student and the community. For it to serve as an effective tool that will survive the test of time, careful

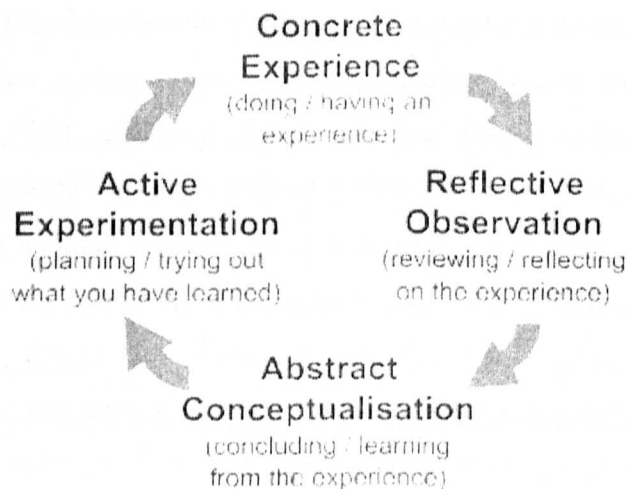
thought must be given to the pedagogy of Service-Learning. A model which simply asks students to go into community settings and learn through experience is potentially damaging (Cone and Harris, 1996, p.32).

Kolb's work on experiential learning is an important link in providing a theoretical framework to underpin Service-Learning approaches and informed the work of Moore (1990) and Cone and Harris (1996). Jarvis (2004), Le Cornu (2005), Youniss and Yates (1997) have directly and indirectly contributed to the formation of new models of Service-Learning as they addressed the nature of experiential and identity formation.

3.3.1 David Kolb: Experiential Learning Model

The experience of critical reflection underpins all authentic Service-Learning and experiential learning processes (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Jacoby, 1996; Eyler, 2002; Jarvis, 2004; Simons & Cleary, 2006). The experiential learning model pioneered by Kolb offers an insightful framework to guide the generation of appropriate curricula in Service-Learning. Using Dewey's scholarship (1938) as his guide, Kolb proposed a four stage experiential learning cycle involving concrete experience, reflection, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984, p.22). This cycle is illustrated diagrammatically in **Figure 3.2**.

Figure 3.2 : Kolb's Experiential Learning Model



The central role that experience plays in the active learning process has been highlighted by Dewey (1938), Lewin (1951), Piaget (1970), Kolb (1984) and Jarvis (2004). These scholars saw experience as integral to the process, thus combining experience, perception, cognition and behavior. For Jarvis, experience between individuals and their environment is pivotal for learning; a process of internalization as those same individuals transformed and made sense of this interaction (Le Cornu, 2005, p.172). Kolb's model incorporated the work of Lewin (1951), which emphasized here-and-now concrete experience to validate and test abstract concepts and active feedback processes in generating valid information.

Immediate personal experience is the focal point for learning, giving life, texture, and subjective personal meaning to abstract concepts and at the same time providing a concrete, publicly shared reference point for testing the implications and validity of ideas created during the learning process. When human beings share an experience, they can share it fully, concretely, and abstractly. (Kolb, 1984, p.21)

Moreover, Dewey's model of experiential learning acknowledged "learning as a dialectic process integrating experience and concepts, observations, and action" (Kolb, 1984, p.22). Learning occurs in reflection upon, and the interaction between, the participant's actions, decision making and conceptual frameworks. In order to promote meaning-making, Kolb invited his students to reflect on their experiences in community settings, guided by an instructor, in order to form abstract concepts and hypotheses that are then used to inform future practice. Kolb's key contribution was in identifying the importance of reflection in relating the world of concrete experiences to abstract theories, and producing a model that honored the variety of learning styles that students presented (Cone & Harris, 1996, p.33).

In Kolb's model, ideas are not fixed and immutable elements of thought, but are formed and re-formed through experience. The learning in Service-Learning is a process whereby concepts are derived and continuously modified by experience. The sense-making process is squarely situated in the social context, in the interaction between the person and the social environment. Learning is an active part of the sense-making process, working on, rather than simply responding to inputs from the

outside world (Moore, 1999). This perspective contrasts with the 'banking' concept of education where education becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Service-Learning repudiates this passive model of learning and acknowledges that knowledge emerges "through invention and reinvention, through restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (Friere, 1974, p.58). In late adolescence, values and beliefs are in a state of flux as teenagers question and experiment in order to come to some awareness of who they are and what they stand for. This time of identity-formation parallels well the processes of invention and reinvention necessary for learning to occur in an experimental context.

The process of forming and reforming, invention and re-invention generates the need for mentoring in the adolescent learning process (Cone & Harris, 1996). A mentor's role is important in introducing new ideas and questioning old ones. The integration and substitution of new ideas into a learner's concept map leads to resistance, which in itself is part of the learning process. In both Lewin and Kolb's models, learning results from the resolution of conflict between concrete experience and abstract concepts, between observation and action. The resolution of conflict invites reflection upon experience.

The fluidity of Kolb's model is important for learning and requires quite specific abilities. For effective learning, Kolb suggests that the learner requires four kinds of abilities: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation.

They (the participants) must be able to involve themselves fully, openly and without bias in new experience. They must be able to reflect on and observe their experience from many perspectives. They must be able to create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories and they must be able to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems. There are two primary dimensions to this learning process: concrete experiencing of events at one end and abstract conceptualization at the other. (Kolb, 1984, p.31)

The four abilities that Kolb saw as necessary for effective learning are not to be seen in isolation, but as being exercised in rich learning environments. One element of Kolb's model that has led other practitioners to use it as the basis for theory development, is his recognition of the importance of environment in experiential learning. While environment is important in all learning, it is especially so in Service-Learning where the participant is invited into relationship and interaction with people whose life circumstance is normally quite different to their own. Learning in this context goes beyond the stimulus-response mode used in scientific inquiry. In Service-Learning the variables are not independent and the interaction is not one way. For Kolb, the 'environment of real life' gave the learning process a rich context (ibid, p.34). As participants interact with their environment there is change in one's subjective, personal and internal experience and change in the objective 'out there' experience.

Experience does not go on simply inside a person. It does go on there, for it influences the formation of attitudes of desire and purpose. But this is not the whole of the story. Every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had ... an experience is always what it is because of a transaction taking place between an individual and what, at the time, constitutes his environment. (Dewey, 1938, p.42)

Learning "is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p.26). This transformation of experience requires reflection-linking concepts and personal experience as they both change and develop over time. As the Service-Learning programme proceeds there may be changes in the participant's inner experience of the environment. These changes have an effect on the outer, objective environment as well. If a participant is growing, for example, in his or her inner understanding of the dignity of all people, this may be experienced as ease and comfort in interaction in the wider, objective environment. This engagement with the environment, in the context of strong ideology, supports the importance of reflection and mentoring for participants. The lack of a clear role for mentors 'in the field', or pro-active insertion into the learning process at critical

times, tends to leave students on their own to make sense of what they are experiencing. Moore (1990) built upon Kolb's work in this area, suggesting a post-structuralist approach that encouraged the participant to be a critical thinker in the world of experience.

3.3.2 David Moore: Contextual Model

Moore based his praxis on the belief that meaning is not centered or fixed in time, and that by using experiential approaches the student could be immersed in these changes. Moore invited students to 'read' their workplaces as texts in which students "examine the histories, power arrangements and values underlying their work organizations" (Cone & Harris, 1996). Service-Learning sites and experiences present stimuli foreign to the participants' day-to-day lives. In reflecting on this stimulus, with the concepts ingrained in the programme, participants may find more meaning in the experience (Strain, 2005).

Experiential learning takes place in the interaction of context and cognition, the process by which participants in a social setting organize their interactions in such a way as to make learning possible (Moore, 1981, p.288). The study of the context of interaction has been called 'context analysis', 'micro-ethnography' or 'constitutive ethnography', and identified the importance of speech and other structuring procedures to accomplish interactions (Moore, 1981, p.289). Speech and structuring procedures are often linked to the ideological context and philosophy that underpin programmes. People do not simply respond to environmental stimuli on the basis of previous imprinting on their nervous systems, but rather select and transform incoming information, information from events, ideology and social analysis. By enacting a given social context, people create the conditions under which certain kinds of cognitive activities are evoked or inhibited (Moore, 1981, p.290). These activities take place as the participants take up the tasks at the service site. One of the appeals of Service-Learning for adolescents is its focus on doing rather than just talking about doing.

The identification of a set task for the participant to perform and possibly be shared by the service user of the programme is important in Moore's approach. Those

involved in the Service-Learning project “usually share some minimal definition of the purpose of their interaction. This shared purpose represents a basic agreement among participants about what they are trying to get done” (Moore, 1981, p.292). This ‘purpose-related task’ is important for learning to occur and parallels the process of identity formation (Youniss & Yates, 1997). The purpose-related task is performed in the context of what Moore referred to as the ‘organizational ethos and ideology’, creation and use of beliefs, values, explanatory systems, concerns, and interests within the organization.

The student receives messages from co-workers, such as ‘this is the kind of people we are’, ‘our world operates like this’, or ‘it’s important that these things be supported’. These belief systems form an ideational core for the student’s placement experience. (Moore, 1981, p.297)

In both Kolb’s and Moore’s models reliance is placed upon the ability of the student to make sense of what they are experiencing during their time of reflection or while in the field. In suggesting a refinement of Kolb’s model, Cone and Harris saw as its main weakness the ambiguity around the role of the educator or mentor in the process. Service sites can be complex places and the sub-culture of relationships in an old person’s home, home for handicapped people, a soup kitchen or homeless shelter and other social service settings would all provide challenging texts for students to read.

As a consequence, many educators continue to send students out to ‘learn in community settings’ and ‘reflect’ on their work without a clear understanding of how experiences instruct or how educators make use of the reflective process. (Cone & Harris, 1996, p.33)

The reframing phase of participants’ experience in a Service-Learning programme would be an important time for instructors/ mentors to help students make sense of apparently conflicting data, mixed messages from the service users of the programme and confusion in the clash between their experience of the service user group, their perception of the programme ideology and their prior-stereotypes.

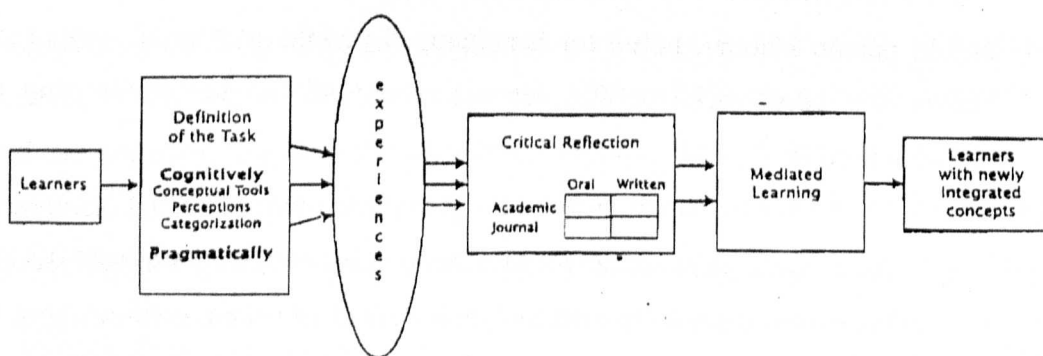
Consequently, Cone and Harris focus attention on the role of the mentor in the learning process both before and after field experience.

3.3.3 Cone and Harris: Lens Model

The Lens Model suggested by Cone and Harris begins with the learner and their unique set of characteristics. Each student comes to the Service-Learning experience with their own personal history, value systems, perspectives, attitudes, expectations and cognitive abilities.

After acknowledgment of the individuality of each learner, the Lens Model addresses academic and pragmatic issues: the definition of the task and the cognitive conceptual tools to make sense of the experience that students utilize during the course of the programme. If this time of preparation and pre-brief is not undertaken, there is a danger that “each student may simply continue to understand their new experiences in the same ways using the tools of conceptualization that already lie within their grasp” (Cone & Harris, 1996, p.35).

Figure 3.3 : The Lens Model⁹



As mentors/ instructors provide students with tools and skills to identify problems, formulate questions, gather information and analyze social situations they assist them to a higher level learning. The more frequently students use abstract concepts to frame observation and think about, describe and talk about the world, especially a sub-culture such as the world of poor people, the more they elicit meaning from

⁹ Adapted from Cone & Harris (1996), p.45.

experience. In time those concepts become integrated into the thinking processes of the user and provide 'coat hangers' on which to place new understanding. For example, a student may enter a Service-Learning situation with a superficial understanding of what poverty (lack of food or shelter) means. Through reflection upon experience, the use of conceptual language and mentoring, the participant may come to newer understandings of poverty, especially psychological poverty triggered by mental illness or substance abuse. This awareness may even lead them to the point of becoming more cognizant of their own emotional or spiritual 'poverty'. This innate growth enables the student to stand back from the experience and critique it. The concept is no longer the academic theory of the mentor, but a real and used tool for the student's own understanding of the experience. "As these analytical methods and organizational concepts are acquired, they move students one step closer to being able to think critically and defend their points of view" (Cone & Harris, 1996, p.36).

To aid the process of critical thinking, the third phase in the Lens Model, the experience itself must be "discontinuous and distinct from students' everyday experiences so as to broaden their perspectives on the world" (Cone & Harris, 1996, p.33). Clearly cognitive and emotional dissonance has to be deliberately planned in quality service experiences if the hoped for outcomes are to be realized. In the model, both predictable and unpredictable experiences are important for learning to occur, and practitioners are challenged to build in factors in the experience that promote active learning and minimize those that hinder learning. In the experiential learning process, students 'anticipatory cognition' uses scraps of input from perceptions from preconceived models and understandings to read what is going on around them. Active cognition is more likely to occur if the unexpected is encountered; this leads to a heightened state of arousal. Cognitive arousal is most often created when roles are changed, concepts challenged and the participant's world brought into question. The resulting dissonance leads to challenges to existing conceptual frameworks in which expectations are violated, thus leading to an aroused condition which invites the participant in the experience to re-conceptualize/ learn (Cone & Harris, 1996, p.37).

A holistic approach involving the students' intellectual and emotional capacities as

well as written and oral skills is suggested for the reflection component that makes up the fourth part of the Lens Model. The Lens Model highlights the importance of this reflection component being 'guided' by an educator or mentor who can facilitate the student's learning process. The mentor's role, among others, assists in the awareness of possible preconceived labeling or patronizing behaviors that could potentially do harm to the recipient of the service and limit the Service-Learning relationship (Gardner, 1987). Over time, a range of problems, questions or issues may arise out of the Service-Learning relationship and each has important potential for deeper learning. The mentor helps in identifying these and leads the student to some form of personal resolution.

The context for this resolution lies in the interplay between the theory and ideology of a Service-Learning programme, and the participant's individual and collective experiences within that programme. This is where the notion of socially constructed meaning comes alive. Through their reflections, both written and oral, the students shape and reshape their ideas based upon a larger public or communal discourse.

This mediated learning leads us back to the learner recognizing that rather than being some sort of abstract pedagogical tool, Service-Learning can be a potentially profound influence on a student's intellectual and personal growth. The purpose of Service-Learning is to assist students in gaining knowledge and to use their experiences in the community to build upon, critique and evaluate that knowledge, and in so doing move to intellectually higher ground. Ideally students may have gained an increased ability to engage in critical discourse at an abstract and conceptual level. Hopefully too, the student now has broader perspectives based on experience in the field.

3.3.4 Patrick Green: Service-Reflection-Learning Model

The Service-Reflection-Learning framework put forward by Green (2006) suggests a cyclic model that helps make sense of student experience in Service-Learning. Beginning with the student's experience, the framework moves to reflection, to meaning-making and facilitated learning, back to the service experience, this cycle repeats itself.

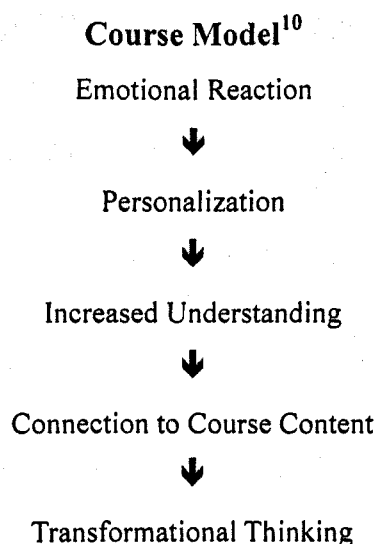
As the journey of the participant moves on cyclically, it is fostered by instructional reflection and reframed questions similar to the Academic Questions of Cone and Harris' model. After several cycles new learning occurs.

In the Service-Reflection-Learning framework, the repetition of experiences and reflection, coupled with facilitated learning, leads to meaning-making. Green's framework is an open-ended helix or spiral allowing for continuous and repeated learning to occur. This framework acknowledges the central role played by the instructor, whose mediation in the form of instructor reflection and reframed questions leads to new learning. New learning can occur at any time in the framework, and some 'learnings' may need a longer period of time and a wide variety of reflection methods before they are achieved. The Service-Reflection-Learning framework is a developmental process that follows several steps:

- (1) Reflection upon service experience
- (2) Identification and creation of the experience's meaning through reflection
- (3) Connections made between service experiences and course content (curriculum) by way of guided reflection/ questions/ discussion lead by the instructor
- (4) Reflection by programme instructors on student reflection responses leading to pedagogical strategy change
- (5) The reframing of prompts to better enhance the connection between student experience and course content
- (6) New learning, new understanding and new concepts – resulting from the repetition of the above steps (Green, 2006, p.69)

As students reflect upon experience, certain stages are identified within that reflection. These stages, like the framework itself, are cyclic. It is within these stages of reflection in a Service-Learning course that students experience the meaning-making process.

Figure 3.4 : Recurring Stages of Student Reflection in a Service-Learning



In the early stages of service work, the emotional reaction of students to the experiences at the service site are often strong, and these reactions are identified by Green as the beginning of the meaning-making process (ibid, p.72). These strong emotional reactions coupled with reflection become a 'light bulb' experience that leads to deeper understanding (ibid, p.104). Some of the emotional reaction of students would be linked to issues of ethnicity, socio-economic standing and other demographic differences related to privilege (Dunlap, Scoggin, Green & Davi, 2007). As they attempt to engage with communities vastly different to their peer and family circle, programme participants need to be invited to grow in privilege awareness. This process is not easy and many will go into denial, but "recognizing and addressing students' struggles with privilege, guilt, and related emotions can assist them in engaging more effectively in the community" (Dunlap et al., 2007, p.4).

In my study, the students may not be more 'privileged' than the communities they serve. However, they have an idea that they are capable to 'serve' others. A sense of privilege or superiority would be found in some students' minds. In the Service-Learning projects, it is the best time for them to reflect on the 'mutual' service experience, that is, both the students and service users would benefit from the service experience.

¹⁰ Adapted from Green (2006), p.220.

Once participants have interacted with other volunteers and the service users of the programme, the process of personalization begins: talking with and learning from the stories of individuals. As they share stories with individuals at a service site, they are humanized and participants relate to them on a more personal and empathic level. Hence the importance of programmes that allow for direct contact; “it was through experiencing the people and their stories that perspectives change” (Green, 2006, p.158). Direct contact is not always easy and at times a student will be confronted with a situation linked to another’s disadvantage (compared to their socio-economic privilege) or disillusionment. These ‘trigger events’ tend to “create cognitive disequilibrium, that is, a discomfort or confusion brought about by new information that must either be assimilated or accommodated into one’s cognitive structure” (Dunlap et al., 2007, p.4). The role of Service-Learning mentors is to identify this disequilibrium within the reflection process and assist students to work through it; grapple with it. As this process occurs the ‘other’ in the relationship becomes more personalized beyond stereotype and reaction.

Service-Learning based disequilibrium, when properly supported, can enable students to re-evaluate society, their place in society, their and others’ identity, and perspectives on socioeconomics and race. Through reflection and discussion, students may begin to diminish the disequilibrium between their past and present experiences. (Dunlap et al., 2007, p.10)

As participants personalize the service, stereotypes are challenged and the ‘service users’ become ‘people’. As participants journey from a distanced view to a personalized view of those they are seeking to serve, the issue addressed by the service (e.g. Homelessness) becomes contextualized. This contextualization and the repeated cycle of reflection upon experience lead the participant to deeper levels of understanding and meaning.

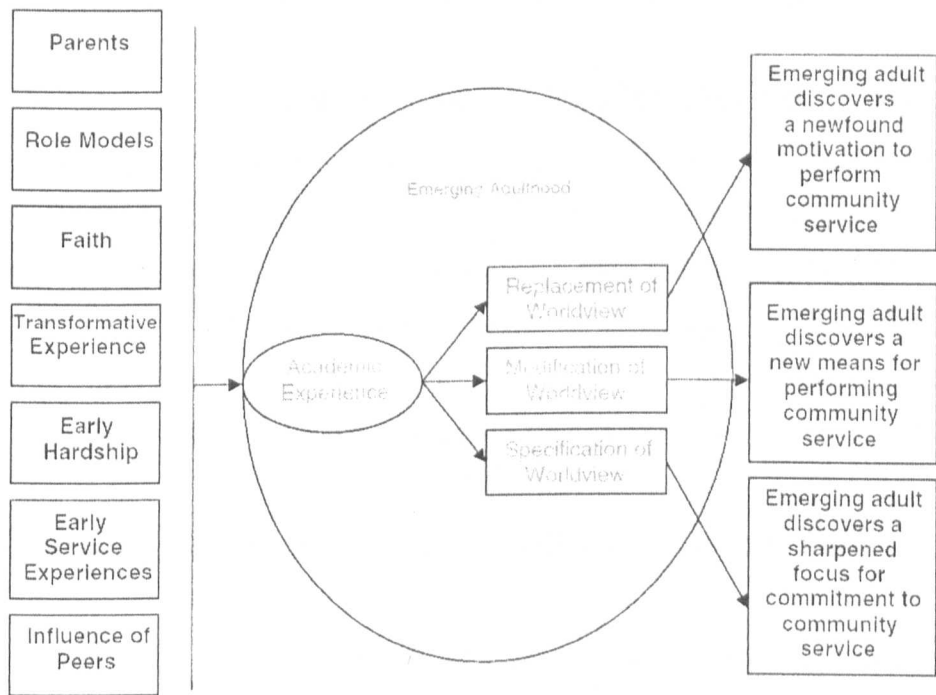
Deeper levels of understanding of the issues addressed by the programme then lead students to make connections back to and between the elements of the course content. By understanding and making links between a particular issue and social structures, historical factors, causal factors etc., participants are more likely to have

an increased empathy and more sophisticated thinking around the issue addressed. Finally, as students reflect within the framework of Service-Reflection-Learning, they may move to a point of transformational thinking where perspectives change, possible solutions are identified and an increased sense of agency experienced.

3.3.5 Scott Seider: Framework Experience Model

In interviewing young adults who had an in-depth commitment to Service-Learning programmes, Seider identified “the impact of a particular academic experience that they believe to have altered what Erikson (1968) referred to as their ‘ideology’, and contemporary identity scholars refer to as ‘worldviews’” (Seider, 2007, p.69). One pathway to a longer term and more in-depth commitment to service-work and social action could be involvement in a frame-changing experience; a several days to several weeks academic experience/ programme that aims to alter the students’ worldview and/ or self concept in relation to their place in that world. This frame-changing experience builds on the pre-disposition for service established by parents, deep religious faith and significant mentors (Seider, 2007). The Framework Experience Model developed by Seider is outlined below in **Figure 3.5**.

Figure 3.5 : Framework Experiences: Impact of Academic Experiences that led to replacement, modification and specification of Worldview¹¹



In Service-Learning programmes, the effective development of framework experiences early in the participants’ experience will prepare students to make sense of what they experience, give them a ‘why’ for service, help motivate them and give them more effective means to serve.

3.3.6 Experiential Education

Service-Learning is a form of experiential education. Experiential Education is defined as: “education that makes conscious application of the students’ experiences by integrating them into the curriculum” (Carver, 1996, p.9), and is a growth sector in education. A wide continuum of Experiential Education programmes and experiences exist ranging from ‘Wilderness/ Outdoor Education’ to Community Service, Immersion programmes, Work Experience to Service-Learning (Moore, 2000). This wide range of programmes are common in authenticity (considered by participants as activities relevant to their lives). programmes provide meaningful experiences within the context of the students’ outlook on life, cater for active

¹¹ Adapted from Seider (2007), p.629.

learning where students are physically and/ or mentally engaged in the active process of learning, draw on student experience and then provide ways to connect student experience and learning to future opportunity (Carver, 1996, p.10).

Central to all experiential education are experience, relevance and reflection where students, with or without the help of a mentor, are actively engaged in the learning process and are not just passive observers. Active student engagement in the learning process, whether in an outdoor setting, or in different service settings, may lead to a development of personal awareness of their power and potential to be agents of change in their communities, a sense of belonging to a community with a purpose and a growing realization of their own competency (Carver, 1996).

3.4 Role of Service Coordinator/ Mentor in Service-Learning

As shown in the section on Service-Learning Models, the importance of the mentor's/ instructor's roles in the Service-Learning process is observed.

In Kolb's Experiential Learning Model, the mentor/ instructor guides the students (participants) to form abstract concepts and hypotheses to inform future practice. Through introducing new ideas and questioning old ones, the mentor/ instructor helps students (participants) to think of their experiences and generate new ideas and knowledge. The lack of a clear role for mentors/ instructors 'in the field', or pro-active insertion into the learning process at critical times, tends to leave students on their own to make sense of what they are experiencing; it is the role of facilitator in the reflection process.

In Cone & Harris' Lens Model, the role of mentors/ instructors in the learning process both before and after service experience is emphasized. Mentors/ instructors are responsible for providing students with tools and skills to identify problems, formulate questions, gather information and analyze social situations and they assist them to a higher level learning.

Green's Service-Reflection-Learning Model acknowledges the central role played by the mentor/ instructor, whose mediation in the form of mentor/ instructor

reflection and reframed questions leads to new learning. New learning can occur any time in the framework, and some 'learnings' may need a longer period of time and a wide variety of reflection methods before they are achieved.

To sum up, the mentors/ instructors act as a role model in the Service-Learning process. They not only lead the students (participants) to commit to service projects, but also demonstrate their enthusiasm in serving people. Moreover, they give direction in doing, thinking and reflecting on the service experience. More importantly, they help students (participants) to interpret and connect service experiences into daily life practice. From Chapter 5 onwards, I will use the term service coordinator/ mentor to replace mentor/ instructor.

3.5 Service-Learning and Development of Meaning

Experiential learning and especially Service-Learning centrally acknowledges the context specificity of learning. It is in this rich learning environment that individuals respond to experience and in which the process of internalization takes place. Youniss and Yates (1997) have contributed to the understanding of adolescent identity development through service, theorists of experiential learning such as Jarvis (2004) and theologians such as Le Cornu (2005, 2006) have further developed our appreciation of the role of experience in self-reflection and meaning-making through internalization. The process of internalization relies upon reflection to assist participants to construct their moral and civic identity (Le Cornu, 2006). As they respond to experience and reflect upon it individuals construct a sense of self and meaning.

Human learning is a combination of processes whereby whole persons construct experiences of situations and transform them into knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs, values, emotions and the senses, and integrate the outcomes into their own biographies. (Jarvis, 2004, p.111)

Internalization is an integral dimension of learning, accounting for changes both in individuals and the social and cultural milieu in which they live. Through reflection

the individual “takes in to themselves” and make their own the sifted-through learning from their experience (Eyler, 2002). The ultimate goal of this process is meaning based understanding flowing from knowing rather than having knowledge (Le Cornu, 2006). As this level of understanding is reached, the individual is reached and the individual experiences profound and intimate inner change: existential change. No two experiences are identical, nor are individuals affected in exactly the same way from one experience to another. Through reflection, the individual makes changes to their mental and conceptual maps, enabling them to make meaning from what they have experienced. This process is deeply related to people’s lifetime quest to understand personal identity, purpose and meaning and is highly existential in nature (Jarvis, 1992). The external experience is ‘progressively internalized’; internalization becomes the bridge between learning and existential change (Le Cornu, 2005). This schema is illustrated in **Figure 3.6**.

Figure 3.6 : Schema of Progressive Internalization¹²

Progressive Internalization

- ↓ Conscious awareness of an experience
- ↓ Perception of different facets of that experience
- ↓ Establishment of a relationship between individuals and the object of their attention
- ↓ Reflection
 - Surface approach (information)
 - Deep approach (meaning and significance)
 - Tacit knowing (external knowledge has been so absorbed that it is now part of them)
- ↓ Existential change

Some existential theorists would talk about ‘triggering events’ and ‘transformative experiences’, “sudden, unexpected occurrences that create powerful emotional responses that may ‘trigger’ a re-examination of one’s life-choices” (Seider, 2007, p.3) as being pivotal in bridging the gap between emotion and awareness. Triggering or transformative events seem to impact on one’s emotions initially as linked and afterwards, one’s worldview. Green sees the doorway to new learning as linked to epiphanies or “intense emotional reaction combined with further personalizing the issue” (Green, 2006, p.207).

¹² Adapted from Le Cornu, (2006), p.14.

Others (Seider, 2007) would suggest that when one begins with the development of academic frameworks and concepts, a worldview is created or shifted that then leads to possible emotional responses to this shift. Frame-changing experiences may provide the scaffolding for deeper internalization. These emotional responses may lead to longer and deeper commitments to service, as they now take place in the context of the 'why' provided by the worldview.

Framework Experiences, in providing the conceptual map that enables students to find meaning and sense from experience, rely on programme mentors or facilitators for their effectiveness. These mentors play a key role in the interpretation of and engagement with the day-to-day experiences participants have. Individuals shape their Service-Learning experience through an ongoing interplay between attention to pertinent stimuli, assessment of the context within which the experience occurs, storage of perception about the experience, and retrieval of expectations based on prior experiences (Sheckley & Keeton, 1997). The role of Framework Experience prior to the commencement of a programme is to set up an experience 'search strategy' that influences the image, information, and stimuli to which individuals will pay attention. No individual can attend to all the stimuli in a setting, so the framework experience helps set up a cognitive-affective template of images or expectations that will focus attention on pertinent aspects of a situation (ibid).

As students enter the Service-Learning site, they are flooded with a wide range of experiences. Some of the information linked to experience will remain in the episodic memory only as long as the individual is paying attention to it. However, if this information is tested against models of meaning stored in semantic memory, it can be either 'confirmed' or 'disconfirmed' leading to more lasting 'knowledge about the world' or worldview. The outcome of the matching process influences the nature of the learning that occurs from the Service-Learning experience (Sheckley & Keeton, 1997). Generally, there will be a match between experience and expectation, sometimes with some modification, "overall, learners (participants) 'construct' the Service-Learning experiences so that the viability of their expectations, values and models of meaning is maintained" (Sheckley & Keeton, 1997, p.38). The Academic Framework Experience plays a vital role in ensuring that the models of meaning and

expectations reflect the ideology of the programme, otherwise, the interplay between non-informed expectations and experience may confirm and strengthen prior bias.

Sometimes participants find that their expectations are disconfirmed. When disconfirmation occurs, participants are surprised and forced to either ignore (non-learning) or rethink and reconceptualize and even transform how they see the world (Seider, 2007). Individuals in a Service-Learning context learn through an ongoing, dynamic and recursive interaction between their expectations for the experience and the confirmations and disconfirmations they encounter (ibid).

When participants construct Service-Learning experiences so that their expectations for the experience are confirmed, a 'cognitive conduit' is formed. Perceptions that conform to the model of meaning are processed without needing conscious awareness, post consciously or goal dependently (by setting a goal a set of responses specific to that goal are elicited). From prior experiences participants develop and store in semantic memory, durable models of meaning and expectations for situations. When participants move into new situations, they will be particularly sensitive to those specific attributes of the situation that are compatible with their values and the images and expectations that are stored in semantic memory (Sheckley & Keeton, 1997).

As participants' experience are confirmed through use of the conduit effect the 'rule', 'model', or abstraction is reinforced. The use of the conduit effect results in desired learning outcomes because confirmations maintain a coherent, unified, expectation confirming and knowledge consistent view of the world (Sheckley & Keeton, 1997). While this has obvious advantages for learning in a fragile situation foreign to the day-to-day reality of a student, it can impede new learning. The role of the mentor is to continually invite the participant to think outside the box. Those that do not fit within the existing models of meaning, expectations or constructions are forced to stretch their worldview: the accordion effect. When there is a departure from an expectation, information is missing or is extreme, the participant has little or no prior knowledge of the experience or a very complex situation is encountered, the student faces a mismatch between experience and expectation. There is an interaction between the immediate information stored in the episodic memory and the images,

expectations and rule-based symbols stored in semantic memory. To resolve this tension, mentors need to facilitate reflection based processes that will assist participants to abandon, refine, alter or transform their worldview knowledge stored in the semantic memory. By doing so, the learning cycle expands outwards like an accordion; pre-existing mental models are no longer validated by experiential input and so an expanded meaning-making process is required (ibid).

The interplay between expectations and experience, between conduit and accordion effects takes place in context and contextual facts impact learning. The participant in a service situation does not act alone nor in isolation; s/he is part of a rich environment. The participant too comes from his or her often privileged socio-economic background with its ways of viewing and interpreting the world. As the participant enters the service site, they not only enter a foreign sub-culture, but also an environment rich in language, images, models of meaning, norms, taboos and symbols foreign to their life experience. The actors (service users) in this setting permit the 'intruder' (student) to see what they want them to see, and experience what they want them to experience, until such facilitators and 'gate-keepers' within the culture itself play important roles in forming and framing participant experience. It is in the midst of this experience and emotional reactions to it that meaning is found (Green, 2006).

The progression from surface to deeper understanding and meaning-making is characterized by the degree to which meaning is sought and found; a developing internalization through the process of reflection. Ideally, through the processes of Service-Learning, aided by timely interventions from programme mentors, the external knowledge (ideology of the programme, concepts such as reciprocity etc) is so absorbed into the participant through the processes of reflection that it becomes part of them. The process is complete when meaning-making is so effective that none of the original discrete features are identifiable, and the participant is engaged in an internal dialogue with the deeper meaning and significance of the experience. However, not all participants sharing a similar experience come to the same level of meaning.

3.6 Benefits of Service-Learning for Students

In this section, I summarize the benefits of Service-Learning for students based on my review of literature, in order to develop my conceptual framework for my study.

Service-Learning is found to be one of the important ways to integrate students' learning with real life. It also helps the students to strengthen their self-esteem, to motivate their self learning and to develop a sense of social concern and social awareness (Ngai, 2006; Waterman, 1997).

In addition, I find that much of the literature identified the benefits of Service-Learning for students, including improvement in self-esteem, self knowledge, academic performance, civic pride, sense of responsibility, personal skills and decrease in stereotyping (Astin & Sax, 1998; Chan et al., 2009; Dalton & Petrie, 1997; Driscoll, et al., 1996; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Freidus, 1997; Giles & Eyler, 1994; Gray, et al., 1998; Keen, & Keen, 1998; Mabry, 1998; McMahon, 1998; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000; Wade & Yarborough, 1996). In examining the literature from USA, I would employ the Eyler and Giles' framework (1999) in developing my conceptual framework.

With the application of Eyler and Giles' framework (1999), the benefits are grouped into four categories: (1) citizenship behaviors; (2) interpersonal development; (3) personal development and (4) intellectual development. The use of this framework helps me to categorize and organize the diversified data in a more systematic and meaningful way.

3.7 Conclusion: My Conceptual Framework

From the review of literature, I can conclude that Service-Learning is a process, through which the participant not only enters a service site which is a relatively foreign sub-culture to the participants but also the participants will learn something 'new' in such a rich environment through reflection on their own 'experiences' and 'expectations'. The role of the mentors or facilitators is also a key factor in the meaning-making process.

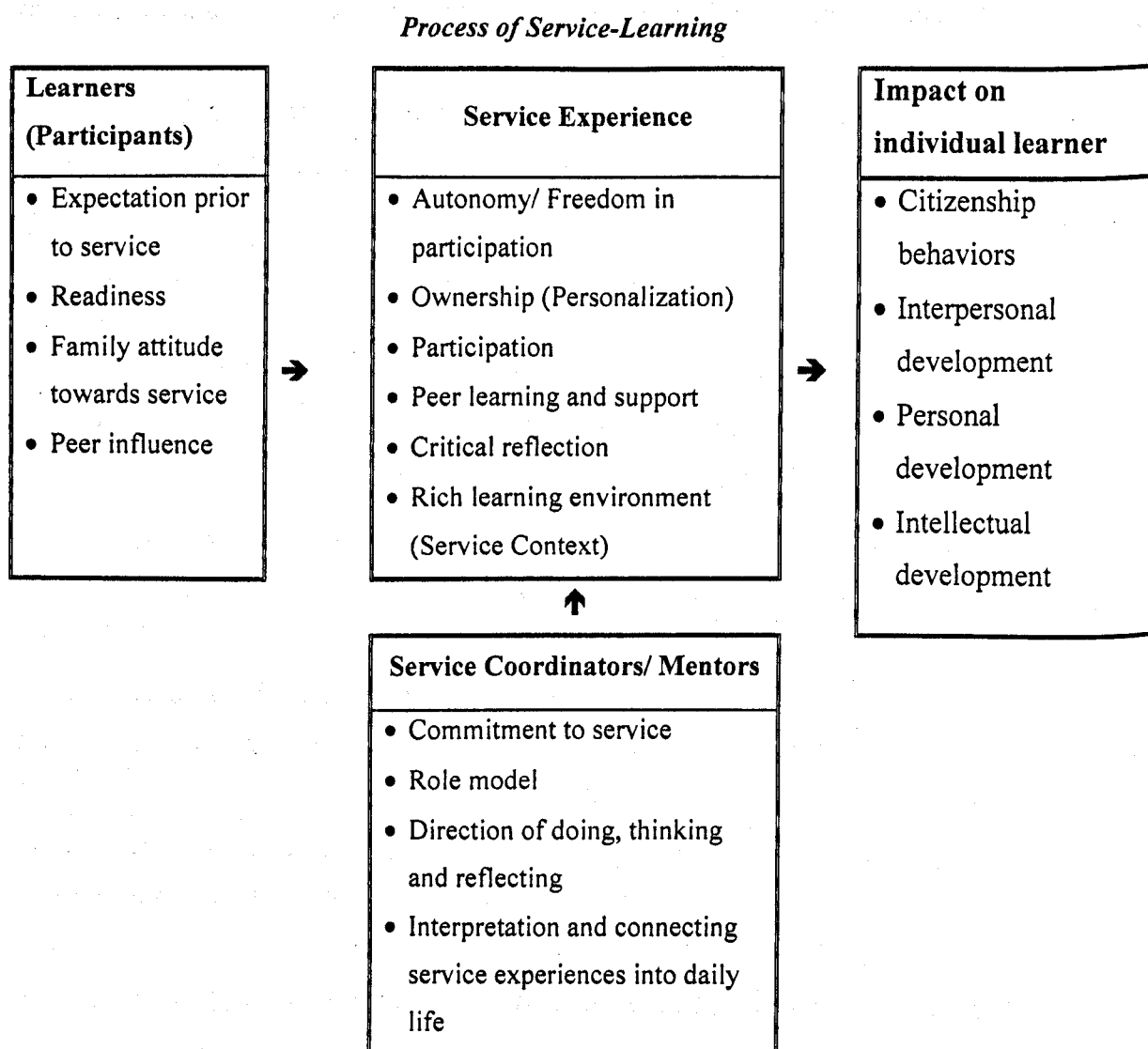
In this final section, I will propose my conceptual framework of the present study. A conceptual framework is a consistent and comprehensive theoretical framework emerging from an inductive integration of previous literature, theories, and other pertinent information. A conceptual framework is usually the basis for reframing the research questions and for formulating hypotheses or making informal tentative predictions about the possible outcome of the study (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003).

The importance of a conceptual framework in a doctoral dissertation is obvious. Miles and Huberman (1984, p.33) define a conceptual framework as “the current version of the researcher’s map of the territory being investigated”. Punch (2000, p.54), on the other hand, explains that a conceptual framework represents “the conceptual status of the things being studied and their relationship to each other”. So a conceptual framework provides a clear guiding map for the researcher (in this dissertation, me) to investigate in a more systematic and coherent manner. Miles and Huberman’s notion accommodates purpose (boundaries) with flexibility (evolution) and coherence of the research (plan/ analysis/ conclusion) which all stem from a conceptual framework.

In their discussion on the role of a conceptual framework, Leshem and Trafford suggest that it has to fulfill two roles: firstly, providing a theoretical clarification of what researchers intend to investigate; secondly, enabling readers to be clear about what the research seeks to achieve, and how that will be achieved (2007, p.97).

In my conceptual framework, participants, service experience, outcomes/ impact of Service-Learning experience and mentors are included:

Figure 3.7 : Conceptual Framework of the Present Study



The above conceptual framework (conceptual map) is not necessarily comprehensive, but it is derived from reflection on my reading, my own reflection on personal experience and observation in daily practice.

As discussed and examined in **Section 3.3**, concepts taken from Kolb's Experiential Learning Model, Moore's Contextual Model, Cone and Harris's Lens Model, Green's Service-Reflection-Learning Model, Seider's Framework Experience Model and Experiential Education are located in this conceptual framework. There are different models developed in describing and explaining the learning process of Service-Learning programmes. In my personal viewpoint, the following key concepts are common in different models: experience (service experience),

reflection, mentor and rich learning environment. In my own research process, the importance of these concepts will be examined and discussed, in order to develop a suitable theory for Service-Learning practice.

As one of the foci of the present study is to study how the participants have benefited from a Service-Learning programme, the students' characteristics will also be examined in-depth. Such characteristics are illustrated and discussed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 4 Research Design and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research design adopted. The study is guided by four research questions as stated in **Section 1.2** (p.3):

1. What benefits, if any, do students derive from their Service-Learning experiences?
2. Are particular types of students more or less likely to benefit from Service-Learning?
3. In the construction of an ideal Service-Learning environment for the enhancement of learning, what factors should be taken into account?
4. How should Service-Learning be formulated to enhance students' learning and integration of experience? What model would be most suitable/appropriate to the students in this local context?

Bringle and Hatcher (2005), in suggesting that "Systematic, scientific, theory-based research with reliable and valid operationalizations offers many benefits in contributing to the knowledge base of Service-Learning" (p.33), support quantitative methods for measuring outcomes and designs that control for self selection and pre-existing differences. In Hong Kong, most of the academic research and literature on Service-Learning is based on quantitative methods (Chan et al, 2003; Ngai, 2006). While acknowledging that qualitative methods have strengths, Bringle and Hatcher believe that the academic community will be more receptive to information about the efficacy of Service-Learning that is based on quantitative methods (Bringle & Hatcher, 2005). Bringle and Hatcher challenge the research community to produce Service-Learning theory that can provide coherence across variations in programmes and experiences through common themes and constructs.

Whereas, my study places its data-gathering and analysis within the context of a particular post-secondary institute. Students from different academic programmes and/or from different academic levels are selected as my informants. An interpretive, epistemological framework suited this aim as it seeks to produce 'interpretive' accounts of phenomena, rather than law-like generalizations. The web of relationships that forms the interaction between Service-Learning participants and their 'guests' (i.e. service users), suggests that this social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individual actors. "The act, then, and not the tract is the fundamental datum in social and individual psychology" (Mead, 1934, p.8 cited in Gusfield, 2003, p.121). Given the purpose of the study, the research design needed to be able to guide me to gain contextual information (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The setting of the study was highly particular, the interaction was unique and the relationships, given the nature of people involved, quite complicated. The study explored participant experiences of the Service-Learning projects in the context of the ethos of the institution that sponsored the programme. This exploration invited an interpretative approach that constructed events and experiences in their lives (Crotty, 1998). The approach was appropriate as human situations "can only be understood from the standpoint of the individual actors" (Candy, 1989, p.3). To study human behavior, the observer must, as much as possible, 'take the role of the other', try to see, as much as possible, from the other's perspective. Human beings interpret events, objects and situations and respond to their interpretations. The sociological observer must have some experience of the group to be able to frame a research problem and to develop the appropriate methods of study (Gusfield, 2003). My study examines participant experiences of situations that varied significantly from the usual daily experience of the volunteers. I knew the group and the context well, was a former teacher of the educational institute and also one of the coordinators of the Service-Learning projects in.

4.2 Epistemology: Constructionism

The role of epistemology is to address the nature of knowledge and provide a philosophical basis for understanding how knowledge is possible. My study uses the

paradigm or worldview of 'Constructionism'. A more detailed definition of 'Constructionism' will be discussed later in the section. "A paradigm is a set of propositions that explain how the world is perceived; it contains a world view, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world, telling researchers and social scientists in general "what is important, what is legitimate, what is reasonable"" (Patton, 2002, p.69). What is the form and nature of reality in a Service-Learning situation are diversified and the service opportunities are specific to individual participants. The basis for understanding and interpreting the experience participants had while involved with a service was not objective scientific data, but personal and group articulation of the meanings people used to 'make sense of their life.' My study sought to understand the actors' experiences; the way they constructed their experiences and the meanings they attached to them.

What was important was not observable social action, but rather subjective meaning of such action to the participants (Sarantakos, 2005). The perspective I brought to the study and the perspective of the other actors involved was important, for what we saw and heard "will be interpreted through that perspective; and often each perspective tells us something very important about what is really true" (Charon, 2007, p.2).

The nature of the relationship between the knower and what can be known in the world of a service is both transactional and subjective. The depth and richness of data, the layers of relationship and the complex web of meaning that are generated in the service context, lead to an intimate link between the actors involved.

The epistemology of Constructionism would suggest that realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experimentally based, local and specific in nature. This certainly would apply in a specific Service-Learning context. The Constructions in the present study were not 'true' in any absolute sense, but simply more or less informed in the context of the relationships central to the inquiry. "The investigator and the literally object are assumed to be interactively linked so that the 'findings' are literally created as the investigation proceeds" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.111). Reality is not 'out there' but in the minds of people. Reality is internally experienced, is socially constructed through

interaction and interpreted through the actors, and is based on the definition people attach to it.

The interpretive approach holds that social life is based on social interactions and socially constructed meaning. People possess an internally experienced sense of reality. In contrast to an essentialist orientation view, those with a constructionist orientation assume that the interactions and beliefs of people create reality. There is no inner essence that causes the reality people see; it is a product of social processes. (Neuman, 2006, p.89).

Reality, for interpretive theorists, is not objective but subjective; reality is what people see it to be. It is an active process of creating a world. The reality people experience in everyday life is a constructed reality – their reality – based on interpretation (Sarantakos, 2005). As a study informed by Constructionism, there was no objective truth about participant experiences of Service-Learning waiting to be discovered in the service settings. Rather, the meaning participants gave to their engagement with the reality of service settings and the service users, was constructed by the participants over time (Crotty, 1998).

4.3 Research Methodology

A methodology is a model which entails theoretical principles as well as a framework that provides guidelines about how research is done in the context of a particular paradigm (Sarantakos, 2005). Several methodological approaches are located within the interpretivist theoretical perspective. Case study is one of these. The variable and personal nature of social construction suggests that individual construction can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and informants. The very specific nature of the experience participants in the present study had, and the highly contextualized nature of the world of service setting, would suggest the study was well suited to case study. As Anderson suggests, “Specific situations with individual histories or unique contributions, are worthy of case study” (Anderson, 1990, p.157). Education is a process and there is a need for research methods which are process-oriented, flexible and adaptable to changes in

circumstances in an evolving context. For such situations, the case-study method is often appropriate because it incorporates a wider range of separate methodologies.

Case studies allow for naturalistic everyday, cultural and interactional phenomena to be studied in their own right and in their own territory (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p.316). The particular nature of the world of the service setting, lent itself very well to this method of inquiry. Case studies deal with contemporary events within their real life context, are concerned with how things have happened and why, use multiple sources of evidence and do not attempt to control events (Yin, 2003). Case studies need to be clearly bounded and this is especially true when looking at participant experience of a Service-Learning situation. "There is a focus, a heart of a case study, and a boundary which is often indeterminate, defining the edge of the case, that which is not being studied" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.25 cited in Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p.319). Each case study has its own dynamics and as one examines them, sub-questions to those already identified will emerge. Case studies by their very nature lend themselves to focusing on the issue being investigated, and an examination of the issue, participant experience of a Service-Learning project, will give rise to critical questions which then give rise to an issues and questions matrix (Anderson, 1990).

Case study allows for two levels of questions to arise: those asked of specific individuals when they are interviewed or fill out questionnaires, then the questions asked of the case itself: how things are taking place and why. Case study suited the relational nature of my study. In case study, ongoing analysis is made possible and this is a big advantage of this methodology. Case study also allows for lively narrative and a chain of evidence. Good case studies incorporate multiple sources of data, look for converging lines of inquiry, use triangulation to interpret converging evidence and draw conclusions suggested by different data sources far stronger than those suggested by one alone (Anderson, 1990; Yin, 2003).

One key contribution that case study allows is that of pattern matching. As the research progressed, causal links and phenomena emerged and I have to explain and test such links. One way of testing this was pattern matching (Yin, 2003). Pattern matching is where the pattern of relationships observed in one instance is predicted

in another. When two patterns of interaction match then validity is added to the conclusions (Anderson, 1990). In this research the patterns may be in how participants make sense of what they experienced in the service setting, in how they approached people, or how the service users reacted to them. Other patterns may centre on the data from Focus Groups matching data from Individual Interviews, or whether data from individuals' daily journaling matched the reflections from others.

Case studies allow the researcher to concentrate upon a particular incident, an in-depth study of a single event, or a series of linked cases over a defined period of time. The researcher tries to locate the story of a certain aspect of social behavior in a particular setting and the factors influencing the situation. Themes, topics and key variables may be isolated (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). Case study allows for a thick description of the research context; in the present study, participants' experience in the service context. Case study allows for rich and vivid description of events within the case, a chronological narrative of events and an internal debate between the description and the analysis of events. Case study can address the general or at the particular. It can focus upon particular individual actors or groups of actors and their perceptions, upon particular events within the case, the integral involvement of the researchers in the case and ways of presenting the case so as to capture the richness of the situation (ibid).

It is obvious that case studies have their limitations. Often there is a danger that it is difficult to generalize, and I acknowledge this to be the case here. The bounded nature of the case study means that my study addresses participant experience of Service-Learning projects in a self-financed post-secondary institute in Hong Kong. Case study allows this to happen. It allows for a focus and emphasis upon the specific, the clearly bounded and unique. The use of case study has great value in giving some kind of internal coherence to specifics in fairly bounded settings (ibid p.319). To what extent the findings of the present study can be applied to Service-Learning contexts outside of the institute are questions for conjecture. However, by describing richly, I can explore the impact of Service-Learning on students and their learning process, which is valuable for understanding and applying Service-Learning in other institutes.

When addressing the research methods to be used in any case study, it is important that sufficient data are collected so that the researcher is able to:

- explore significant features of the case
- create plausible interpretations of what is found
- test the trustworthiness of these interpretations
- construct a worthwhile argument or story
- relate the argument or story to any relevant research in the literature
- convey convincingly to an audience this argument or story
- provide an audit trail by which other researchers may validate or challenge the findings, or construct alternative arguments (Bassey, 1999, p.65).

In the following section, the different methods of collecting data are outlined. A combination of focus group, individual interview and journal keeping address many of the challenges outlined by Bassey (1999) above.

4.4 Data Collection

The research design guided me to adopt certain procedures or methods for both data collection and analysis. Methods refer to the tools or instruments employed by researchers to gather empirical evidence or to analyze data (Sarantakos, 2005). The nature of the study led me to adopt: (1) participants' journaling; (2) focus group and (3) semi-structured in-depth individual interviews as the key data collecting methods. The time period of data collection was between March 2011 and the end of October 2011.

In the presentation of data a coding system was used. The first two letters, e.g. JW (John Wong) referred to the participant (pseudonym used) whose reflection was being presented. The letters that followed: SRJ (Student's Reflective Journal), FG (Focus Group) and SII (Semi-structured Individual Interview) referred to the type of data source. Finally the numbers e.g. 11.3 (the 11th of March) referred to the date of the data collection. Using this coding system meant that (JW, SII, 11.3) was a comment made by John Wong in a semi-structured individual interview on the 11th

of March 2011.

4.4.1 Participants' Reflective Journals

Participants of Service-Learning projects from the Associate Degree in Social Work programme in the institute were required to complete and submit a Student's Reflective Journal (SRJ) after completion of each Service-Learning involvement. The practice of writing and submitting a reflective journal is not found in other academic programmes of the institute. In this study, reflective journals from informants studying the Associate Degree in Social Work were collected as a source of data. (Please refer to **Appendix A**)

Journal writing in itself is viewed as a valuable stimulus to encourage reflection upon practice (for example, Bean and Zulich, 1989; Cameron and Mitchell, 1993; Hahnemann, 1986; Wagenaar, 1984). It is suggested that, through the journal writing process, the participants could reflect on their learning process and consolidate their learning into daily life.

The SRJ is designed as a qualitative piece of writing in which a brief description of the service and learning process is included as a starting point for students' own reflection. Students are required to establish their own learning objectives in each of the Service-Learning involvements. They also reflect on their learning (positive sides and negative sides) in their participation.

Reflection upon experience would appear to deepen the learning in Service-Learning. "Reflection is an essential component if Service-Learning curricular are to impact on personality development and socio-emotional aspects of the learning process" (McCarty & Hazelkorn, 2001, p.32). Reflection upon experience may well be the key to 'other oriented' thinking and behaving that sets the stage for purposeful, meaningful social skill acquisition and generalization (McCarty & Hazelkorn, 2001). The type of reflection needed to make sense of Service-Learning experiences demands vocabulary rich enough to describe the complexity of the interaction of thoughts, feelings and behaviors inherent in human relationships. Hence the importance of situating the Service-Learning experience within a social science or

social science related curriculum where relevant concepts and vocabulary are frequently introduced, developed and used.

Education theorist Dewey espoused an educative experience that fostered meaningful (purposeful) learning. For Dewey, "an effective learning condition was one that actively engages the student with the content in an intensely personal way" (Hubbs & Brand, 2005, p.61). Reflective journaling in the context of structured Service-Learning projects aimed to engage the student both cognitively and emotionally with the experience they had just had.

Over time the journaling allowed a deeper approach to reflection as participants looked beyond the information to understand meaning and significance, drawing links and connections where possible (Le Cornu, 2006, p.14).

In Dewey's model of empirical inquiry, feelings in reflection are down-played to allow the student to play the role of 'objective observer' (Cone & Harris, 1996, p.38). Oral and written reflective exercises that connect inquiry with the experience of service are the key to lasting transformation on multiple levels (Strain, 2005, p.62). Reflection honors the belief that learners are the experts in their own learning and developmental processes. "The only learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered, self appropriate learning" (Rogers, 1982, p.223 cited in Hubbs & Brand, 2005, p.62). Reflection, and especially longer periods of journaling provides opportunities for students to mull over ideas, uncover inner secrets, and piece together life's unconnected threads and thus create fertile ground for learning dialogue that connects thoughts, feelings and actions coming from personal experience. Critical reflection, leading to the development of autonomous and independent thought, allowed the student to stand back from the object of attention, their experience in the service setting, and look at it objectively (Le Cornu, 2006, p.15). Reflective journaling is an especially successful strategy for helping the learner to higher levels of critical thinking, and personal insight (Hubbs & Brand, 2005, p.63). Hubbs and Brand use Mezirow's transformative thinking theory to bring out the power of reflection. For Mezirow, the danger is to stay in automatic thinking (i.e. conclusions, judgments which people jump to without thought or question).

Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning, perspectives, habits of mind, mind sets), to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. (Mezirow, 2000, p.7 cited in Hubbs & Brand, 2005, p.63)

Strain would argue the importance of “post-conventional levels of moral judgment that emphasize the autonomous grasp of universal moral principles focused on rights and justice” (Strain, 2005, p.62), and that Service-Learning, and especially internalization linked with reflection, plays a key role in this movement. This was identified by Eyler and Giles when they reflected on the “transformational power of Service-Learning in terms of a transition from patronizing charity to a greater sense of the importance of political action to obtain social justice” (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p.135). The Focus Group and journaling questions in my study were aimed at transformative learning, requiring students to question the foundations and prior learning that went into the formation of a given belief. This process prompted the students to consider whether a given belief came as a result of concepts tacitly accepted, or as the result of a deliberate thought process.

Time in itself does not deepen one’s understanding or insight, and ideology in itself does not lead to deeper awareness. As the participants wrote journals after service experience and discussed them in Focus Groups, there was a filtering and shifting of ideas and concepts, giving rise to beliefs and attitudes leading to deeper awareness and insight.

The other great contribution of the journaling to the data collection for the study was that in the journaling, every voice was heard. Despite the presence of a skilled facilitator in the Focus Group sessions, some voices were rarely heard while others dominated the discussions. The journaling after each service experience allowed every voice to be heard in a private forum, where reactions and reflections were captured on paper, and not publicly discussed and debated as in Focus Groups. The

individual journaling allowed for those students who were more at home with written reflection to be 'heard'.

While advantageous, there is the danger that the journaling could lead to some form of interpersonal looping of ideas.

The personal journal is generally a narrative description of the student's inner processes. The solitary nature of a personal journal does not contain the sounding board effect inherent in dialogue and class interactive journals, and the writer of the personal journal may well process and re-process the same concepts repeatedly with little challenge of his or her accepted beliefs or ideas. (Hubbs & Brand, 2005, p.67).

When the participant wrote journals, s/he was not just internalizing the experience, but going through a process of reflective reasoning. Reality is not given, but individuals construct it by reflecting on their actions in order to make sense of past experience and anticipate their future actions. Through the journals and the Focus Groups the participants are "reasoning together in the sense-making process" (Youniss & Yates, 1997, p.157). Written reflection, focused to understand one's experience, can move the participant to a level of transcendence. Another term for journaling in this context is appreciative inquiry.

4.4.2 Focus Group

Individual journaling is rarely used alone but often, as in the present study, in conjunction with other qualitative methods such as Focus Groups (Wilson, 1997). Focus Groups are the data gathering method used in collecting opinions from students involved in Service-Learning programmes.

Individual interviews and focus groups are socially contrived situations established by researchers to enable participants to 'tell their stories'; stories based in a complex social network to which and in which the participant seeks to give meaning. The use of focus group as a method of eliciting participants' perceptions, attitudes and

opinions has grown in recent years. For researchers, the Focus Group is a highly efficient qualitative data-collection technique which provides some quality controls so that participants use checks and balances to weed out false or extreme views (Flick, 1998, p.115). For some researchers (Flick, 1998; Patton, 2002), the interaction between participants is an integral part of the research process, provided the group facilitator does not allow particular personalities to dominate or others not be heard.

In this study, Wilson's definition of a focus group was applied:

- a small group of 4 to 12 people;
- meeting with a trained facilitator;
- for 1 to 2 hours;
- to discuss selected topics;
- in a non-threatening environment;
- to explore participants' perceptions, attitudes, feelings, ideas and
- encourage and utilize group interactions (Wilson, 1997, p.211).

While there is a difference of opinion as to how much the researcher should inject themselves into the group interaction, there appears to be little doubt that responsibility for both the focus and content of the interview rests with the researcher. For Wilson, the researcher seeks explicitly to exploit group dynamics and analyze the resultant interaction as productions of data (Wilson, 1997), while for Morgan and Spanish, the focus group is a "small, largely un-moderated and without elimination of acquaintances group". For them the researcher takes on a minimalist role in group interactions (Morgan & Spanish, 1984 cited in Wilson, 1997, p.214). Key to the approach Wilson takes is the desire to tap into some 'collective remembering' by the participants, the researchers are able to develop a more complete picture of how participants conceptualize the issues under discussion: feelings, attitudes and perceptions (Puchta & Potter, 2004). It could be argued that focus groups provide the best illuminative data on the way participants interact with each other outside naturally occurring events (Wilson, 1997, p.221).

Normally in the focus group, the researcher leads the discussion and encourages participants to comment on and build upon each other's contribution. For the Focus Group, I was the facilitator as I am skilled at leading groups and I knew the Service-Learning projects well. I focused on encouraging quiet individuals, controlling those who dominated and keeping the conversation flow directional, animated and relevant.

I reminded the participants at the beginning of each group that there is no 'right' or 'wrong' response to the questions under discussion, and that I only wanted their genuine and honest opinion or reaction.

I used small, facilitated focus groups for the purpose of understanding and interpreting participant experience. To best elicit an articulation of participant experience the issue of focus group membership needed to be addressed. Kitzinger (1994) has no problem with the members of the focus group knowing each other well. Kitzinger argues that focus groups composed of respondents who already know each other, may result in,

precisely the people with whom one might 'naturally' discuss such topics, at least in passing and these would be the major sites of 'collective remembering'. By using pre-existing friendship groups we were sometimes able to tap into fragments of interactions which approximated to 'naturally' occurring data (Kitzinger, 1994, p.105).

Not all researchers would agree with this. "We would argue that precisely because we separated members of friendship and family groups into different focus group, respondents were able to be more open in their disclosures on a sensitive topic" (Wilson, 1997, p.217). As interaction between participants is a key feature of the focus group method, there needs to be sufficient diversity of view to encourage discussion and yet not too heterogeneous so as to lead to conflict or the repression of views of certain individuals (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001).

Anderson's (1990) contribution to the above question was to remind the researcher not to restrict the focus group to one target population when several populations are

able to relate to the issue. In the present study, the participants came from different academic programmes in their studies, the 'natural mix' would provide the opportunities for them to interact and stimulate each other to get insight from the focus group.

The significant value of focus groups over interviewing is that it addresses the power imbalance between facilitator and informants. Sometimes informants may feel obliged to provide answers which they think the facilitator wants to hear. Focus groups help to break down the power relationship between researcher and informant. By reconceptualizing the focus group interview as a discussion amongst informants, the researcher goes some way towards democratizing the process, and it is likely that more naturally occurring language will result in what still remains a socially contrived situation.

The focus group not only discloses what is important to individual informants, but it attempts to provide a situation where the synergy of the group adds to the depth and insight; the group strives to provide in-depth qualitative data which could not be obtained as efficiently any other way (Anderson, 1990, p.241). Focus groups provide a setting in which individuals are comfortable with self-disclosure and where the group dynamics create a chain of reaction designed to exhaust the view on the issue or topic. As I was exploring participants of a Service-Learning project, I hoped that the focus group would assist participants in developing their feelings and reactions to the programme and to particular situations within it, and so move them closer to learning.

Kolb, Moore and Dewey all suggest that much of the learning in Service-Learning occurs in the interaction and interplay between cognition and experience, between feelings and ideological constructs and that the verbal interaction of the focus group allows for this. Focus Groups can produce richer data than quantitative methods as they allow for interaction, cross-participant learning and clarification and probing by moderators. The Focus Group can, if skillfully facilitated, engage the individual in a cycle of thought and action based on experience, introspection, shared and examined analysis, and finally synthesis (Silcox, 1993, p.62).

The Focus Group can prompt participants to analyse their experiences (Schmiede, 1995). This is accomplished by “probing about what happened, why it happened, how this could be so, what does it mean, and how things might be done differently. Such questioning prompts students to synthesize their experiences and gives a call to action” (Dewey, 1910 cited in Silcox, 1993, p.64). By hearing others’ perspectives, participants are implicitly encouraged to evaluate their own values, beliefs, and stereotype related to a particular population. However, one key disadvantage of focus groups is that participant influence may yield ‘socially desirable’ rather than candid responses. “Group interviews (Focus Group) are not, without problems: The results cannot be generalized; the emerging group culture may interfere with individual expression, and the group may be dominated by one person; and ‘groupthink’ is a possible outcome” (Fontana & Frey, 2003, p.73).

By using focus group with pre-existing groups, a rich data set is generated, but this may bring into the question the authenticity of the voices present. Some researchers use the terms ‘public’ and ‘private’ voices. The in-depth interview could be seen as a ‘private’ voice situation while the focus group is public. Wilson (1997) would suggest there is no clear cut answer as to the validity and quality of the data gleaned from either source. Some would argue that interviews are overly dominated by the questioner and criticized for not eliciting the true feelings of the respondents (Anderson, 1990, p.241). The value of focus group can be summarized as,

encouraging more open discussion of sensitive issues, allowing the researcher to probe for meaning where one might have been more reluctant to do so in individual interviews, demonstrate a greater variety of discourse than is available in other methods (with the exceptions of observation) and let the researcher experience being in a group with the respondents and hearing them talking with their peers (Wilson, 1997, p.221).

The key to an effective focus group lies in the quality of questions asked. Questions must be carefully selected and phrased in advance to elicit the maximum amount of information. “As participants answer questions, the responses spark new ideas or connections from other participants – cues that are necessary in order to explore the

range of perceptions” (Krueger, 1994, p.54). Typically, focus group questions are open-ended, are qualitative in nature, do not allow for ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers and do not ask ‘why’. When focus group questions do have a ‘why’ nature, it is not because the researcher is looking for a rational answer, but because s/he wishes to determine why from a less directive approach based on how people feel about what is being discussed. Good focus group questioning will be sequenced, leading to a natural flow resulting in a feeling of participating in a discussion exploring a variety of related issues (Anderson, 1990, p.243). The Focus Group questions for the present study are outlined in **Appendix B**.

4.4.3 Semi-structured Individual Interview

To supplement the data collected from Focus Group and Student Reflective Journal, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted as the third data collection method.

Patton (1990) identified three basic approaches in collecting qualitative data through open-ended interviews. These approaches are: (1) the informal conversational interview; (2) the general interview guide approach; and (3) the standardized open-ended interview (Patton, 1990, p.280). Although the informal conversational interview can establish in-depth communication, it requires a greater amount of time to collect systematic data. The standardized open-ended interview is systematic and the interviewer’s bias in judgment during the interview is reduced. However, this approach is relatively less flexible in getting views and ideas beyond the standardized interview schedule.

The interview guide approach helps the interviewer to ensure that s/he can decide how best to use time available in an interview situation. It provides a “framework within which the interviewer would develop questions, sequence those questions, and make decisions about which information to pursue in greater depth” (Patton, 1990, p.284).

In the present study, the interview guide was developed based on the research questions. A pilot interview was conducted to test the validity and applicability of

the interview guide. The target informant for pilot interview was an Associate Degree in Social Work full-time student who has participated in Service-Learning projects. After the pilot interview, I reviewed the interview guide and amended some wording for the subsequent interviews.

Marton (1994) highlights the characteristics of interview as:

This type of interview should not have too many questions made up in advance, nor should there be too many details determined in advance. Most questions follow from what the subject says. The point is to establish the phenomenon as experienced and to explore its different aspects jointly and as fully as possible (p.427).

The specific purpose of the interview was to identify the mentors' and student participants' understanding of the phenomenon being examined. Therefore, the aim of the interview must be clearly connected to the aim of the research. The role of the interviewer is to see the phenomenon as the informant sees it. Thus, semi-structured open-ended questions are used in this discovery process. Where appropriate, the interviewer not only encourages the informant to reflect on their experience, but to explain further his or her understanding, and examples are sought to make clear the intent and language of the informants (Bruce, 1994). The interviewer must focus on how the phenomenon is seen, experienced and thought of by the participant in the interviewing process. The interview continues until the participants have exhausted their reflection. Trigwell (2000) described the exhaustion as the feeling of full description of experiences and reveal of meaning of relevant words.

All the interviews were conducted in Cantonese and tape-recorded. The transcripts were typed in English. The transcription process was done by myself in order to restore the original expression of the participants for further analysis. Only the transcripts to be used for data analysis and illustration are reported in the dissertation. The translation was made according to the meaning of the transcripts instead of word by word. This is to minimize the changes of meaning and to ensure the accuracy of translations.

To maintain authenticity, I applied the following procedures in the transcription process. Whenever I interviewed an informant, I would take notes and record the interview process by an MP3 recorder. Then, I would leave the record for a week before I started the transcription process. After the transcription process, I listened to the recording several times and checked my transcription until I could ensure that the transcription reflected the informant's expression accurately and adequately.

By the use of individual interview, there was an advantage that I could check with the informants about their wording and meaning as expressed in the transcript. Moreover, probing questions were asked to follow up on the issues wherever necessary.

The semi-structured interview guide with full list of questions is attached in **Appendix C1** (for students) and **Appendix C2** (for staff).

4.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis involves organizing what the researcher has seen, heard, and read so that s/he can make sense of what s/he has learned. In the process of making sense the researcher categorizes, synthesizes, searches for patterns and interprets the data collected. 'Analysis' involves breaking data down into bites and then bringing them together in some meaningful format. Analysis gives life, real life, to our impressions and intuitions. Data analysis takes place as the study proceeds – not by waiting until the data are collected (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

The analysis of data is guided by the phenomenon, the description focus, and the ascribing of equal value to all description and experiences. The data analysis is an iterative and genuine interpretation in nature (Ashworth & Lucas, 1998, 2000; Marton et al., 1993). The researcher has to visit and revisit the data on and off to get what has been said from the transcripts without leaping to a conclusion (Trigwell, 2000). The data collected through interviews would be formed into 'categories of description' or conceptions (Marton, 1981).

In the present study, all the experiences expressed by the participants were taken into

consideration. Responses from different participants were grouped according to similarities and organized in sub-categories based on my conceptual framework (Figure 3.7, p.54).

After collection of data, I transcribed the audio-recordings into text documents. Then, the data were divided into meaningful analytical units. Individual codes were given to data when I located meaningful segments.

The term coding is used and is defined as marking the segments of data with symbols, descriptive words, or category names. During coding, a master list of initial (primary) coding was developed. Then, the codes were reapplied to new segments of data each time an appropriate segment is encountered. To arrange and manage the data collected, the thematic network analysis framework suggested by Attride-Stirling (2001) was adopted. An advantage of Attride-Stirling's (2001) framework is that it provides a systematic framework for analysis of semi-structured interview data. Thus, it allows the researcher to examine the data in a more manageable and structured way. At the same time, the framework provides space for data to be amended or rearranged when new discoveries are made. The Attride-Stirling (2001) method comprises six steps grouped into three stages of analysis (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 : Steps in Analyses Employing Thematic Networks¹³

Analysis Stage A: Reduction or Breakdown of Text

Step 1. Code Material

- (a) Devise a coding framework
- (b) Dissect text into text segments using the coding framework

Step 2. Identify Themes

- (a) Abstract themes from coded text segments
- (b) Refine themes

Step 3. Construct Thematic Networks

- (a) Arrange themes
- (b) Select Basic Themes
- (c) Rearrange into Organizing Themes

¹³ Adapted from Attride-Stirling (2001), p.391.

- (d) Deduce Global Theme(s)
- (e) Illustrate as thematic network(s)
- (f) Verify and refine the network(s)

Analysis Stage B: Exploration of Text

Step 4. Describe and Explore Thematic Networks

- (a) Describe the network
- (b) Explore the network

Step 5. Summarize Thematic Networks

Analysis Stage C: Integration of Exploration

Step 6. Interpret Patterns

Codes and categories were developed by considering each line, phrase or paragraph of the transcript in an attempt to summarize what informants were describing. In employing thematic networks, I read through the transcripts and the primary codes (basic themes) from time to time and thought about the meanings underlying each primary code or basic theme. Then I attempted to group basic themes together to summarize more abstract principles (secondary codes or organizing themes). The process required a significant amount of time and, as more and more data were collected from meeting with informants, I had to refine the secondary themes from time to time.

After the secondary codes or organizing themes were identified and developed, the process of looking at the meanings underlying the organizing themes and the connection among different organizing themes proceeded. A network of themes (global themes) finally emerged.

The procedure of thematic networks does not aim or pretend to discover the beginning of arguments or the end of rationalizations; it simply provides a technique for breaking up text, and finding within it explicit rationalizations and their implicit significance. In this sense, I had to check among the transcripts and triangulate the themes developed from different data collection methods and from different target informants (students and staff members). As a result, I could refine my conceptual framework to devise the dynamic model of Service-Learning.

The coding system for data analysis in the present study is attached in **Appendix D**.

Throughout the data analysis process, I have kept an open-minded attitude towards the qualitative data collected from the focus group, qualitative interviews and reflective journals. It is believed that the data collected were drawn from the 'heart' of the informants. The data collected do not have to have close connection between individual informants. However, the overview of the data would 'construct' the 'picture' of the social phenomena under examination.

4.6 Selection of Informants

In the present study, students from 'the College' were selected as the informants. The choice of informants was based on a combination of purposive and snowball sampling method. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgment about which ones will be the most useful or representative (Babbie, 2008; Given, 2008). Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling method, whereby each person interviewed may be asked to suggest additional people for interviewing (Babbie, 2008; Given, 2008).

The term non-probability sampling is defined as "any technique in which samples are selected in some way not suggested by probability theory. Examples include reliance on available subjects as well as purposive, snowball and quota sampling" (Babbie, 2008, p.203). Unlike probability sampling, where each participant has the same chance of being selected, participants selected using the non-probability sampling technique are chosen because they meet pre-established criteria (Given, 2008, p.562). In the present study, the pre-established criteria were: (1) informants who involved in Service-Learning projects; (2) informants from different academic programmes of the College; or (3) informants involved in organizing and coordinating Service-Learning projects.

According to the above sampling framework, both student participants and service coordinators/ mentors of Service-Learning projects were selected as informants. Students participating in the Service-Learning projects were invited to be

participants. In the ideal case, 4 to 6 participants of Service-Learning projects from different academic programme would be grouped together to form a Focus Group. However, owing to limited accessibility and availability of the students involved in Service-Learning projects in the College, only one focus group (five students) was conducted. The five students came from the Social Service Group (a student organization) of the College. They are all social work (Foundation Year) students.

In dealing with this situation, six individual interviews were conducted to collect views from different modes (full-time and part-time mode) of academic programmes (computer studies and social work) at different levels of studies (from professional diploma, foundation year to associate degree). Some informants of the individual interviews were invited through snowball sampling. The informants selected for individual interviews did not participate in the focus group. Thus, I could get a more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under examination.

Three mentors of Service-Learning projects of the College were interviewed. Two of the mentors are staff members of the Student Development Centre. Whereas, the third one is a lecturer from Associate Degree in Social Work, who is also a co-founder of Service-Learning projects for ADSW students.

Moreover, three samples of the Student Reflective Journals were collected and selected for data analysis (content analysis).

4.7 Ethical Issues

In any research there could be concerns about the extent to which the researcher's biases or perceptions influence data collection, analysis and reporting; these concerns need to be named and monitored (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2003). Norum would suggest that in qualitative research biases, if recognized and named, can be helpful directing our research.

Our biases help us identify stories. They help us choose what to describe. They help us define the beginning and ending points. They help us determine whether we are listening to a story or for a story.

They can serve as the source of faithful ideas and illuminating perspectives (Norum, 2000, p.319).

Babbie (2008) summarized some of the most important ethical agreements that prevail in social research. I discuss the issues with respect to my study:

- (1) Voluntary participation
- (2) No harm to the participants
- (3) Anonymity and confidentiality (Babbie, 2008, pp.67-72)

Voluntary Participation

A major tenet of medical research ethics is that experimental participation must be voluntary. The same norm applies to social research and education research. No one should be forced to participate.

In the present study, as I work as an outsider of the institution under examination. I gained the approval of the institute before collecting data. Participants (students and staff members) were told the purpose of the study, the length of the study, the requirements of informants, the importance of the study, and the personal benefit to be gained from participation. In addition, they were told that their participation was completely voluntary. In doing so, the informants were requested to read and signed a 'Consent Form' (please refer to **Appendix D**) before the commencement of the data collection process.

No Harm to the Participants

Social research (and so with education research) should never injure the people being studied (i.e. the informants), regardless of whether they volunteer for the study.

Clearly, in the present study, the informants were protected from being harmed. The questions developed in the in-depth interviewing guide and guidelines for focus group were expressed in positive or neutral terms. Informants were invited to reflect on the positive sides and process of participating in Service-Learning projects. Their reflection on different aspects of the service process was highly accepted and appreciated.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

The clearest concern in guarding informants' interests and well-being is the protection of their identity. 'Confidentiality', was applied. A research project guarantees confidentiality when the researcher can identify a given person's responses but essentially promises not to do so publicly (Babbie, 2008, p.70).

The application of confidentiality was done by the written consent made by the researcher and the informants. A written consent form was developed to explain the nature, the scope of the present study and the usage of the data collection from the informants. The informants' identity was kept confidential through assignment of a specific code to each informant (wherever applicable). By doing so, the identity of the informants could not be identified in the findings and results of the research project (Please refer to **Appendix D**).

In addition, Bassey (1999) suggested that research ethics involves three headings: respect for democracy, respect for truth and respect for persons (Bassey, 1999, p.73).

Respect for Democracy

While a researcher has many freedoms (to investigate and to ask questions, to give and receive information, to express ideas and criticize the ideas of others and to

publish research findings), these freedoms are essentially subject to responsibilities imposed by the ethics of respect for truth and respect for persons.

Respect for Truth

A researcher is expected to be truthful in data collection, analysis and reporting findings. The research journey is a commitment to trustfulness and to the rejection of any form of deception (of self or others).

Such respect for truth in the present study was practiced by the use of tape-recorder to record the process of in-depth interviews and focus group. The transcripts of the interviews and focus group were transcribed and documented in detail. Any positive and negative findings were reported and discussed in this dissertation.

Respect for Persons

In taking data from persons, the researcher must always be aware that the participant is always the first owner of the data and that the participant must always be treated with dignity and have their privacy respected (Bassey, 1999, p.74).

The present study involved taking extensive data from the informants through reflective journals, and participation in focus group and in-depth interviews and trying to extract some meaning that is not apparent or not previously substantiated. To maintain 'respect for persons' and to obtain the informants' cooperation in providing data, the guidelines for the use of the data were negotiated with informants early in the research process. In specific terms the ethical concerns revolve around the topics of:

1. informed consent;
2. right to privacy; and
3. protection from harm. (Fontana & Frey, 2003, p.89).

To sum up, the following procedures were put in place:

1. A 'Consent Form' outlining the purpose, the length of the study and the requirements of participants, was handed to potential informants at a meeting prior to the commencement of the study.
2. Informants were informed that the record of the focus group and individual interviews would be made available to them as soon as possible, for them to check and amend where necessary to fully reflect their belief or intention.

For the three staff informants and eleven student informants, each of them was given a coded number that I attached to their reflective journals and also given the same pseudonym used during in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

4.8 Role of the Researcher

At the beginning of the present study (i.e. in the drafting of proposal stage), I had been a lecturer of the Associate Degree in Social Work programme of the College for five years. In this position, I acted also as one of the two founders of the Service-Learning projects for ADSW students.

With the exposure to Service-Learning projects and experience in teaching students of the College, I have developed my knowledge base and insights on the operation and implementation of Service-Learning projects for ADSW students. Such a knowledge base allowed me to develop a proposal on the development of Service-Learning in the ADSW programme (Please refer to **Appendix F**). In the first place, I wanted to examine the implementation of Service-Learning for ADSW students.

Since I have changed my job and left the College, I have also changed my position from insider to outsider with regard to Service-Learning projects. There was a degree of distance between my presence and the participant responses. In addition, there were also difficulties in accessing the participants and staff, in collecting students' reflective journals etc. arising from my change in role from a teaching staff member to a researcher outside the College. My experience in the present study was that I needed to establish a degree of familiarity and sense of collegiality with the participants to allow them to reconceptualize my role as co-researcher with them.

Owing to my own passion for the relationships that Service-Learning projects at the College are building, my own self-interpretation and analysis of the data is important. In the present study, my insights, reflections and ideas about the area examined and the data gathered, thus become an important part of the data base contributing to the validity of qualitative analysis (Patton, 2002, p.513).

4.9 Legitimation

Legitimation concerns itself with the degree to which findings capture the reality of the situation under investigation. This reality though is holistic, multi-dimensional and ever-changing, and is not a single, fixed and objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed and measured (Merriam, 1998, p.167). Creswell and Miller see validity as “how accurately the account represents participants’ realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p.124). However, some scholars believe that in case study methodology, the concepts of reliability and validity are problematic (Bassey, 1999).

The quality of a piece of research lies in its validity. Conventional forms of validity assessment place heavy emphasis on data objectivity and generalizability of findings, which are considered by many researchers to be inappropriate for qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 2002). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that qualitative studies should achieve ‘trustworthiness’, a study that represents as closely as possible the perspectives of the research participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) address this by considering four concepts that work together to achieve trustworthiness – credibility, transferability, auditability, and confirmability. The concepts and the strategies in enhancing the quality of the present study are discussed as below.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the degree to which a study’s findings represent the meanings of the research participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Drisko (1997) suggests qualitative

“interpretations must be authentic and accurate to the descriptions of the primary participants” (p. 191). Padgett (2008) explains that, to achieve credibility, qualitative research must manage the risk of research reactivity and bias. Research reactivity refers to the potential for the researcher or the study procedures to exert an impact on the participants thereby changing the findings of the study.

To manage such bias, I engage in reflexivity and seek to build self-awareness regarding my own influence on the research project (Drisko, 1997). Reflexivity is defined by Horsburgh (2003) as “active acknowledgement by the researcher that her/his own actions and decisions will inevitably impact upon the meaning and context of the experience under investigation” (Horsburgh, 2003, p.308). Reflexivity involves a thoughtful consideration of one’s standpoint through reflection that may occur through keeping a written journal and engaging in dialog with peers (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004).

Throughout the interview or focus group process, I tried to play a ‘listener’ role rather than as an active participant role in the process. I would also state my viewpoints on the issue in a form of questions for discussing with the informants. In the transcription process, I would spend time in looking at the data and re-examining whether I influenced the informants’ viewpoints.

As a former teaching staff member of the College and a co-founder of Service-Learning projects for ASDSW students, I have gained knowledge and experience on the issue under investigation. I believe that valid interpretation of data involves contextual understanding rather than an explanation of phenomena. Stake (2000) also supports this view when he claims that “explanation belongs to propositional knowledge, understanding more tacit interpretation which requires contextual familiarity” (Stake, 2000, p.21). My position in the institute provided me with prolonged engagement with the informants, as well as a deeper understanding of the internal institutional context and culture and the environment in which the institution operates. During the data collection process, I left the College and acted as ‘outsider’ to observe the phenomenon. Such a change in role allowed me to become more objective in clarifying my potential bias but still having the basic understanding of Service-Learning in the College.

Other strategies to increase credibility include triangulation, member checking, and thick descriptions. Padgett (2008) defines triangulation as a concept adapted from navigational science involving the use of “two or more sources to achieve a comprehensive picture of a fixed point of reference” (Padgett, 2008, p.186). By gathering data from multiple sources (data triangulation) or utilizing multiple analysts to review the data (observer triangulation), qualitative researchers are able to achieve what Drisko (1997) refers to as ‘completeness’ or an exhaustive response to the research question. Data triangulation might involve gathering data at multiple points in time or using varied data collection strategies such as interviews, focus groups, or observations (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In the present study, multiple sources of data were collected for data triangulation. Data collected from students (participants of Service-Learning projects) in the form of interviews, focus group and reflective journals were triangulated with the data collected from interviewing staff (Service-Learning mentor/ instructor).

In addition, during the interviews and focus group, I restated and summarized information collected and then questioned the informant to determine accuracy of my record. The rationale for doing so was to conduct member check/ respondent validation. It is a technique used to help improve the accuracy, credibility, validity and transferability of my study. However, this member check process was limited by the time constraints as I have no time to provide the transcription to each of the informants for ‘validation’.

Auditability

Auditability refers to the degree to which research procedures are documented allowing someone outside the project to follow and critique the research process (Padgett, 2008). While quantitative research requires strict adherence to study procedures, qualitative methodology does allow for some flexibility. In fact, some suggest high quality projects should demonstrate an iterative process that changes as the study unfolds (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Drisko, 1997; Frankel, 1999; Morrow, 2007).

The strategies used to increase auditability include keeping an audit trail and engaging in peer debriefing. An audit trail is a written account of the research process that includes a reporting of what occurred throughout the research project along with a demonstration of reflexivity. In the present study, I employed the 'audit trail method' as proposed by a number of qualitative researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994). To facilitate a trail for audit checking, I made the research process transparent through detailed documentation of the conceptual development. Conceptual framework, research questions, methods of data collection and data analysis are clearly written so that readers can understand how the findings were generated. In doing so, readers can have confidence in the trustworthiness of the conclusions and recommendations suggested.

As a doctoral student, my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Trahar helped in the process of peer debriefing. Peer debriefing involves consulting with colleagues experienced in qualitative methodology (Padgett, 2008). By discussing research decisions and procedures, important feedback can be provided enhancing the quality of the project (Shenton, 2004). Peer debriefing can help to promote reflexivity allowing researchers to become more sensitized to the effects of their socio-political position. It can also enhance the research process by generating new ideas and identifying potential pitfalls related to the methodology. Throughout the dissertation process, Dr. Trahar's contribution in refining the research methodologies and conceptualization of research findings were important to my success in completion of the dissertation.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the ability of others to confirm or corroborate the findings (Drisko, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Shenton (2004) asserts "steps must be taken to help ensure as far as possible that the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher" (Shenton, 2004, p.72). To achieve confirmability, a study demonstrates that the findings and data are clearly linked. There are several strategies that a researcher can use to increase a study's confirmability. In the present study, the use of peer debriefing, and audit trails ensured the confirmability.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings are applicable or useful to theory, practice and future research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Sandelowski (1986) refers to this concept as 'fittingness' suggesting transferability has to do with the degree to which findings fit situations outside of the study and are found meaningful. Qualitative research studies are not generalizable according to quantitative standards, because probability sampling is not employed. Instead, qualitative studies typically use purposive sampling to seek a specific group of participants who have experienced the phenomenon being studied, as in my study. In addition, constructivists challenge the relevance of generalizability in qualitative research, "arguing that an emphasis on generalizing strips away the context that imbues a qualitative study with credibility" (Padgett, 2008, p. 182).

Although qualitative researchers do not seek generalizability, transferability is achieved when the findings have applicability to another setting, to theory, to practice, or to future research. Devers (1999) suggests for findings to achieve transferability, "...the contexts must be similar. Therefore, it is the role of the researcher to identify key aspects of the context from which the findings emerge and the extent to which they may be applicable to other contexts" (Devers, 1999, p.1165).

Regardless of the issue of transferability, a case study of a single site might be considered to have a low degree of transferability. A single case study was chosen without any expectation that the research findings could be transferred to other education institutes. The case itself was a particular context and the interaction among different parties (participants, staff and service users of Service-Learning projects) was unique in such a specific organizational context. The focus of the study was on the issues rather than on the case as such. To assert that the findings of the study based on interpretation are valid is not to assert that the findings are generalizable beyond the specific data, methods or measurements employed. Rather, it asserts that 'instrumental interests' of the case itself, given the rich contextual description, enable readers to have better understanding or have clearer insight into a particular issue or theory (Stake, 1994).

The term transferability implies an “empirical matter, depending on the degree of similarity between sending and receiving contexts ... The best advice to give to anyone seeking to make a transfer is to accumulate empirical evidence about contextual similarity” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.297). The responsibility of the researcher is to provide sufficient descriptive data to make the judgment of such similarity possible. The contribution of my study is hence the provision of a thick description of the research data and a proposed Service-Learning framework that address the needs of the students in the College.

To sum up, the following strategies were employed to improve the trustworthiness of the present study (Table 4.1¹⁴):

Table 4.1 : Research Strategies for Increasing Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research

Strategies	Description
Reflexivity	A thoughtful consideration of how a researcher’s standpoint can influence the research.
Data Triangulation	Collecting data from multiple sources such as interviews, focus groups and journals.
Thick Descriptions	A thorough representation of the phenomenon of inquiry and its context as perceived and experienced by study participants.
Audit Trail	Keeping a detailed written account of the research procedures.
Peer Debriefing	Meeting with mentors or other researchers engaged in qualitative research to dialogue regarding research decisions.
<i>Sources: Lincoln and Guba (1985); Padgett (2008); Shenton (2004)</i>	

4.10 Summary of Research Design

Qualitative case study research methodology was employed in my study. To investigate the participants (students) in Service-Learning projects in the College in relation to my research questions, reflective journaling, focus group and semi-structured individual interviews were used as tools for data collection. The students were selected as informants based on the purposive sampling method.

¹⁴ Adapted and modified from Lietz & Zayas (2010), p.198.

In addition, mentors of the Service-Learning projects were also selected as informants. A semi-structured interviewing guide was developed to collect mentors' views on their role in Service-Learning projects and their perception of participants' performance in the Service-Learning projects.

In order to ensure the study was conducted ethically (that is, without any harm to the informants and respecting their rights to participate or not participate in the present study), various measures were considered and implemented to deal with the ethical issues such as confidentiality, respect for person, informed consent and privacy.

Chapter 5 Data Presentation and Analysis – Students' Views

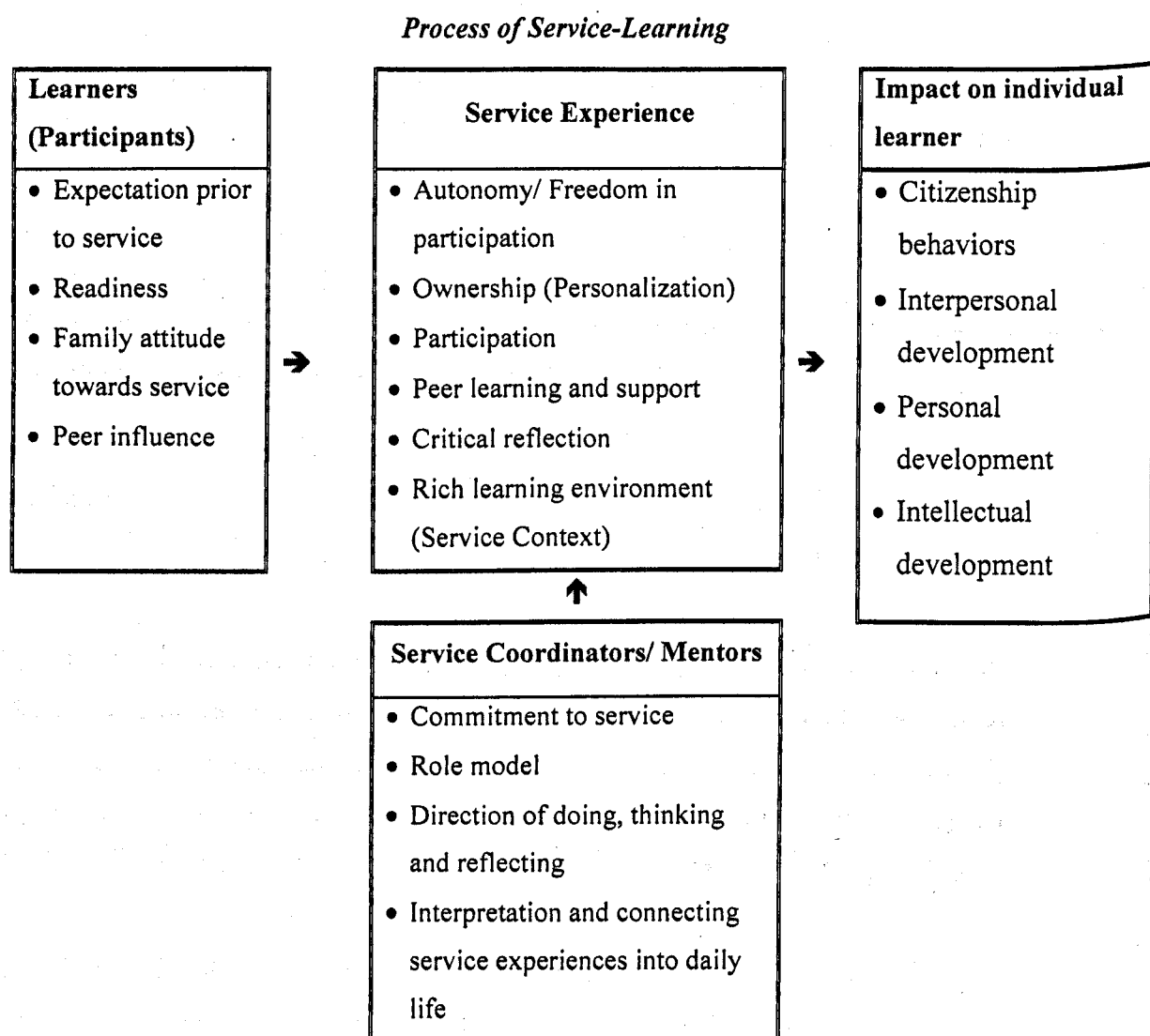
5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to display and analyze the data collected from the focus group interview, semi-structured individual interviews and reflective journals from the group of student informants. All of the informants are students 'the College' at different academic level, namely, associate degree foundation year (HKQF Level 3), professional diploma (HKQF Level 3) and associate degree (HKQF Level 4). Both full-time and part-time students were selected for interviews to enhance the richness and comprehensiveness of the data collected.

In the data analysis process, the conceptual framework developed from literature review in Chapter 3 has been used as the framework for the thematic analysis (**Figure 5.1**). The Learners (Participants), Service-Learning Experience, Service Coordinators/ Mentors and Impact on Individual Learner (Benefit of Service-Learning) guides the analysis.

In managing the large amount of data, I selected relevant quotes from informants' responses in the interview or focus group to support my analysis. The selection of the quotes was based on the criteria of 'representativeness' and 'majority view'.

Figure 5.1 : Conceptual Framework of the Present Study



5.2 Brief Description of the Student Informants

A purposive sampling method was employed in selecting the informants, as described in Chapter 4. In analyzing and understanding the informants' responses in the individual interviews, focus group and reflective journals, the informants' background and a brief description of the Service-Learning projects they attended provides a context for our analysis.

For the purpose of protecting informants' confidentiality, all of the informants are assigned a pre-defined code in the presentation of data. As outlined in **Section 4.4** (p.59), the first two letters, e.g. JW (John Wong) referred to the participant

(pseudonym used) whose reflection was being presented. The letters that followed: SRJ (Student's Reflective Journal), FG (Focus Group) and SII (Semi-structured Individual Interview) referred to the type of data source. Finally the numbers e.g. 11.3 (the 11th of March) referred to the date of the data collection. Using this coding system meant that (JW, SII, 11.3) was a comment made by John Wong in a semi-structured individual interview on the 11th of March 2011.

5.2.1 GC, YT, BC, EW and CL (Focus Group)

GC, YT, BC, EW and CL are Associate Degree in Social Work Foundation Year students. They are led by AY of the Student Development Centre in the College in forming a school-wide Social Service Group (for higher diploma and associate degree students). This focus group composed of the core members of the Social Service Group on a voluntary basis. So their participation in the Service-Learning projects did not connect with any academic subjects.

In the academic year of 2010-2011, several social service (Service-Learning) projects for students were organized under the name of the Social Service Group. The service users of these Service-Learning projects included elderly people, primary school students and Project Yi Jin¹⁵ students of the College.

Before the group participated in the Social Service Group, they had attended the subject 'Chall-tice' in their previous studies in the College. The 'Chall-tice'¹⁶ is an academic subject which is aimed at developing students' civic awareness and concern for the society and providing a meaningful platform for students to explore and experience with stronger resilience¹⁷ (Appendix F). Through curriculum-related Service-Learning projects and other related learning activities, students are expected to develop a higher level of resilience and civic responsibility.

¹⁵ Project Yi Jin is a preparatory course for post-secondary programmes at the HKQF Level 2.

¹⁶ The subject 'Chall-tice' is a subject of Associate Diploma. The Associate Diploma is a preparatory course for post-secondary programmes at the HKQF Level 2.

¹⁷ Adapted from the subject outline of 'Chall-tice'. The term 'Chall-tice' means 'Challenge' and 'Practice'. The subject provides challenges of different types and allows students to practice and experience the challenging situations. This subject is a core (compulsory) General Education subject.

5.2.2 TKY (Individual Interview)

TKY is a Professional Diploma in Computer Studies full-time graduate (HKQF Level 3). He graduated in 2010.

Through connection and coordination with the Student Development Centre of the College, TKY participated in a Service-Learning project on 'Promoting Information Technology Literacy' to the elderly. The Service-Learning project was an educational project where students (mainly the core members of the Computer Society) of Computer Studies organized Information Technology classes for members from a senior centre. The project was initiated by the senior centre, and the students from the College were invited to conduct Information Technology classes for the elderly. The characteristic of this project was that no academic staff members from the College were involved. The students were responsible the whole Service-Learning process, including curriculum design, preparation of handouts and notes, direct teaching and class evaluation. The aim of the project was to develop funding for the Computer Society.

5.2.3 DL (Individual Interview)

DL is a full-time Year 2 (final year) student of the Associate Degree in Social Work. She participated in a Service-Learning project conducted by the Nursing Department of a local university.

The Service-Learning project is titled as: 'A study to promote well being for community-dwelling seniors'. In this project, participants were invited to interview one or more elders and facilitate the interviewee to construct his or her own 'Life Story'. In this context, 'Life Story' refers to a facilitated written account of an individual's life. The Life Story approach has been widely used in various settings and has become popular in elderly care in recent years.

Participants in this Service-Learning project are expected to:

1. Be successfully trained

2. Join at least three cycles in this project
3. Visit seniors 6 times per cycle on a regular basis (around once a week); and in each cycle, become involved in helping two seniors to develop their life story books
4. Take part in some other relevant activities related to the project (e.g., project team meeting; supervisory meeting with social workers of seniors' centres)
5. Facilitate seniors to share their life stories during these visits

The training programme consists of four sessions, topics include: (1) Orientation and briefing of the project; (2) Life Story approach; (3) Interviewing skills; and (4) Communication with older people – Dos and Don'ts.

As a Service-Learning project, DL was involved in conducting an interview and construction of 'Life Story' for her service user (an old man aged above 80). In addition, the project is also a research project to examine the mental health conditions of the service users. The staff from the Nursing Department of the local university took both the service coordinator and researcher role.

5.2.4 KS (Individual Interview)

KS is also a full-time final year student of the Associate Degree in Social Work. Unlike DL, KS selected to participate in Service-Learning projects as offered by the College under the Service-Learning programme.

Owing to the fact that there is a special requirement from the Social Workers Registration Board (2007, p.4)¹⁸, students of recognized social work training programmes have to participate in '100 hours' placement preparation or related activities' as one of the graduation criteria. In this regard, the teachers of the Associate Degree in Social Work have developed a policy to include Service-Learning as part of the '100 hours' placement preparation or related activities', the Service-Learning programme (**Appendix E**).

¹⁸ Please refer to the 'Principles, Criteria and Standards for Recognizing Qualifications in Social Work for Registration of Registered Social Workers' (2009) by Social Workers Registration Board. http://www.swrb.org.hk/text-eng/criteria_e.htm

In other words, the participation in Service-Learning projects would be one of the graduation criteria for all ADSW students (both Full-time and Part-time Mode).

5.2.5 MT (Individual Interview)

MT graduated from the full-time Associate Degree in Social Work in 2009-2010. He was only involved in Service-Learning projects offered by the College and social service organizations on non-curriculum-related basis. At present, he is employed as a social worker working in a social service organization for the elderly.

5.2.6 PYL (Individual Interview)

PYL graduated from the part-time Associate Degree in Social Work in 2010-2011. She was only involved in Service-Learning projects offered by the College and social service organizations on a non-curriculum-related basis.

5.2.7 LS (Individual Interview)

LS graduated from the part-time Associate Degree in Social Work in 2010-2011. He was only involved in Service-Learning projects offered by the College and social service organizations on non-curriculum-related basis.

5.2.8 Summary of Informants' Profile

A summary of the description of the student informants is as follows:

Table 5.1 : Profile of Informants (Students) and their participation in the Data Collection Process

Name (Code)	Academic programme	Status	Study Mode	HKQF Level	Data Collection Tool
GC	Associate Degree in Social Work	Foundation Year	Full-time	3	Focus Group & Reflective Journal
YT					
BC					
EW					
CL					
TKY	Professional Diploma in Computer Studies	Graduated on 2009-2010	Full-time	3	Individual Interview
DL	Associate Degree in Social Work	Final year	Full-time	4	
KS		Final year	Full-time	4	
MT		Graduated in 2009-2010	Full-time	4	
PYL		Graduated in 2010-2011	Part-time	4	
LS		Graduated in 2010-2011	Part-time	4	

In the present study, most of the student informants came from the Associate Degree in Social Work programme. In reviewing the implementation of Service-Learning in the College, I tried to select both full-time and part-time students from different cohorts for comparison. In fact, I found that there were differences in the operation of Service-Learning opportunities for students in different cohorts.

In the next section, the students' perception on their Service-Learning experience are displayed and discussed.

5.3 Perception of Service-Learning Experience

A reminder that, in this research, a broad definition of Service-Learning is applied.

Service-Learning is defined as:

a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of Service-Learning. (Jacoby, 1996, p.5)

The purpose of applying a broad definition of Service-Learning is to explore the informants' understanding and perception on the concept and practice in the College context.

As I have interviewed students from various academic programmes at different HKQF levels, I will compare the informants' perception of their Service-Learning experiences in a systematic way.

5.3.1 Service-Learning as a New Learning Experience

DL, in the interview, suggested that Service-Learning is a form of learning, in which she not only serves the service user, but she could also learn from the service users in various ways:

Throughout the Service-Learning process, ... I have also learned much in the process. Such learning is much more than I could think before the commencement of the service! I have learned much on human nature. ... I have never thought what I could learn in this service project. I have changed my views on human nature, my negative thoughts on life and human beings. It gives me new hope and ideas on gender role. (DL, SII, 23.3)

As a social work student, DL believes that serving others is her mission. However, she might have preconceived ideas about 'service' and 'serving the needy' as she has been an experienced volunteer in the past. The Service-Learning project of life history provides a new perspective on 'gender role' and 'happy family' to her.

The 'Life Story' project provided a platform for DL to have in-depth dialogue with the service user. Such a platform allowed DL to reexamine and reflect on her own values, her preconceived ideas on the helping professions and her own life history. In this sense, not only the service users of the service projects benefit, the participants of Service-Learning also gain much in the process.

In the focus group, the informants stated that in the Social Service Group (Service-Learning projects for diploma and higher diploma students), the participants could have more learning opportunities as they could take up a more important role:

In my previous experience, I am just a participant where the service projects had been planned and prepared by the worker. My involvement was limited. Whereas, in the Social Service Group, we took the leading role. We have to discuss and plan the rundown of the service projects, we have to prepare service proposal and check whether our service plan would meet the service users' needs. We were also responsible for preparing the materials and equipments for service. (GC, FG, 19.7)

Just like GC's saying, we took up the role as a planner/ designer of the service projects. We are not just the helper. In this designer/ planner role, we have to consider many factors and issues and prepared much for the service. (YT, FG, 19.7)

From the above, we find that the degree or level of learning from Service-Learning opportunities varies according to the participants' level of participation in the projects. In the service projects in which students' involvement is limited to be a 'participant', the nature of learning and benefits to student is limited. For the projects where a student needs to be more involved in interacting with the service users, reflection on one's values and change in attitudes will become possible. A more detailed discussion will be developed in the next section, where student ownership is found to be the key factor of learning in the Service-Learning process.

5.3.2 Service-Learning as a Burden to Students

It is obvious that the value of Service-Learning might not be identified by all students involved in the Service-Learning projects. Some students suggested that the Service-Learning projects could be an additional requirement to the heavy workload of their studies. For example:

I felt surprised when I heard that I have to participate in Service-Learning activities. ... I do not understand why I have to participate in Service-Learning activities. In addition, I am not ready to search and find Service-Learning opportunities on my own capacity. (KS, SII, 27.10)

KS is also a full time social work student with rich experience in social service involvement. She was surprised by the requirement for completion of some Service-Learning projects based on her expectation towards social work studies. She expects her role to be a 'student' rather than a 'Service-Learning participant'. In addition, she is not ready to get involved much in Service-Learning and has quite negative feelings about 'Service-Learning'.

KS's feelings are also shared by PYL, a part-time ADSW student:

As a part-time student, I felt that I could not spend time on completing the Service-Learning requirement as set by the College, especially at the beginning. Secondly, there was also a problem that the service project we preferred to attend might not be approved by the College. Students are frightened that they could not complete the requirements. (PYL, SII, 17.10)

The fear of unable to complete the Service-Learning requirement might be explained by the fact that the curriculum of the ADSW programme is deemed heavy. In completing the Service-Learning requirement, students have to pay extra effort in searching for Service-Learning opportunities or attending Service-Learning projects coordinated by the College.

5.3.3 Service-Learning as a Choice

While some students prefer to have Service-Learning projects coordinated and organized by the College like KS, other students prefer to have their own choice:

I prefer to have some Service-Learning opportunities organized by the College, and the freedom of choice provided for students in selecting Service-Learning experience is important. ... Students should have opportunities to participate in service based on their own interest. (MT, SII, 21.10)

MT accepts that participating in Service-Learning projects would help students to develop their skills and knowledge in social work studies. However, he prefers to have a choice in selecting his own Service-Learning experience. The same idea is also shared by Part-time ADSW students:

In my experience, the College has arranged some of the Service-Learning projects so that we have no need to find out the projects by our effort. However, the arrangement might not fit the students' needs and some of the Service-Learning workshops are duplicated with our learning in ADSW. I prefer to have more choices for the students to select what they need. (LS, SII, 19.10)

Students are motivated to attend Service-Learning projects based on their own choice. In this practice, they could relate their learning needs with the selected Service-Learning opportunities. Moreover, students are also motivated to involve themselves in-depth in the Service-Learning process. According to Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984), people will reflect more on experiences that are meaningful. As a result, new learning will be derived from the service experience. The extra effort paid to completion of Service-Learning projects should provide 'value for learning' as viewed by students.

5.3.4 Service-Learning as Contribution to the College

Among those I interviewed, one group of students was involved in their Service-Learning project for a special reason. Rather than aiming at 'learning', 'serving

people' and/or 'completion of graduation requirement', they organized a Service-Learning project to support the College Computer Society.

Our service targets (users) are old people. In the project, we taught them the popular IT programmes & techniques, including: photo-taking, simple pictorial processing, use of Facebook etc. ... the hosting social service organization have paid us instructor fee for the classes. All of the instructors (our classmates) decided to make this Service-Learning as our fundraising project for the Computer Society. (TKY, SII, 14.7)

TKY's primary intention in participating in the Service-Learning project was just to assist the development of the Computer Society of the College. However, upon completion of the Service-Learning projects, he experienced learning and development in the process.

I think the most important impact of the Service-Learning project on me is the improvement in my self-confidence. When I begin to find my job, I should initiate contacts with variety of people. If I could not overcome the obstacles in communication, I would fail in many occasions. (TKY, SII, 14.7)

As claimed by TKY, one of the outstanding characteristics of Information Technology (IT) students in the College is their lack of social skills and self-confidence in communicating with strangers. This characteristic might be an obstacle for IT students in their career and personal development. The exposure to designing, planning and implementing IT classes to elderly people would facilitate students to become more competent in presenting themselves and in relating to others.

5.4 Student Ownership in Service-Learning

One of the major findings was the importance of 'Student Ownership' in enhancing and facilitating participants' learning in the Service-Learning process. The term 'Student Ownership' can be defined as a strong sense of engagement and identity with their contribution in the Service-Learning process.

Pernu (2011) suggested that:

One sign of a strong Service-Learning project is that everyone who participates in the project is engaged and invested. This sense of ownership — by the students, the classroom teacher, and the community partners — can have profound effects not only on project outcomes but also on student learning. (Pernu, 2001, p.1)

According to the informants, 'Student Ownership' was identified as a foundation for students' success in Service-Learning. The success came not only from success in benefiting those service users but also from success in learning by student participants.

In the following sections, I display the elements essential to enhancing the 'Student Ownership' in the Service-Learning process. Moreover, I try to discuss how the College could provide the platform to enhance 'Student Ownership'.

5.4.1 Freedom of Choice

To gain ownership, student participants should have rights or opportunities in choosing the Service-Learning opportunities. If the students feel that they are forced by the College, they would not benefit from the service projects. Both full-time and part-time ADSW students shared this view. For example:

Students' choice should be respected. Each student may have different learning needs. If the College manipulates (arranges) all the Service-Learning opportunities,

students' learning would be bounded and limited. ... I do suggest the College to provide more chance for students to choose among various Service-Learning opportunities. (PYL, SII, 17.10)

In the past, the College offered a number of Service-Learning opportunities for ADSW students. In the year 2010-2011, all of the opportunities became 'compulsory' elements. Part-time students like PYL, believe strongly that freedom of choice (even limited choice) will facilitate students in meeting their individual learning needs.

I prefer to have some Service-Learning opportunities organized by the College, but the freedom of choice provided for students in selecting Service-Learning experience is important. (MT, SII, 21.10)

MT echoed PYL's ideas in requesting the College to provide freedom for students to choose among Service-Learning opportunities. In talking about 'ownership', the participant should have a sense of involvement in selecting the appropriate or relevant Service-Learning opportunities.

5.4.2 Pre-service Training

According to the informants, pre-service training (for example, formal training workshops, sharing sessions by volunteers, briefing sessions, etc.) would help the participants to prepare themselves for participating in Service-Learning projects.

Rather than pre-service training, a recruitment talk (briefing) will attract the volunteers whereby the goals and objectives of the service project can be introduced. ... members of deprived groups (are invited) to share their experience, feelings and struggle in formal classroom setting. Such experience will facilitate students in post-secondary education to understand the society in a critical and reflective way. (DL, SII, 23.3)

In fact, student participants may not have adequate skills and competence in completing the Service-Learning projects. At the very least, the student participants

should have a basic understanding of the needs and characteristics of the service users. The pre-service training should prepare the student participants to be more confident in managing the service projects. In return, they learn more from such Service-Learning opportunities.

5.4.3 Sense of Autonomy

To ensure the impact of Service-Learning projects on student participants and service users, effective design and planning of the projects is essential. Moreover, if the student participants could feel a 'sense of autonomy', they are more motivated to involve themselves in serving people and learning.

The word autonomy derives from the Greek, 'autos' meaning 'self' and 'nomos' meaning 'rule'. Consequently, most operational definitions of autonomy attempt to illustrate an individual's ability to rule one's self. Erik Erikson was one of the first theorists to conceptualize autonomy (Erikson, 1963). Many current models define autonomy as the ability to rule one's self through actions. They operationalize behavioral autonomy with concepts such as self-reliance (Greenberger, 1984), functional independence (Hoffman, 1984), self-regulation (Erikson, 1963; Markus & Wurf, 1987).

In the College, many Service-Learning projects are solely planned by student participants. For example, in the Social Service Group, students from ADSW Foundation Year students take up the leader and designer roles.

Just like GC says, we took up the role as a planner/ designer of the service projects. We are not just the helper. In this role, we have to consider many factors and issues and prepared much for the service. Therefore, division of labor among ourselves becomes very important. (YT, FG, 19.7)

The importance of the planner/ designer role is beyond its 'surface' value. It is found that the service coordinator/ mentor of the Social Service Group, AY, allows the members of Social Service Group to exercise great autonomy in making decisions in planning, designing and implementation of service projects.

For the part of the College, I suggest that there is no need for the College to intervene so much on students' self-programming activities. The College's intervention on our service plan might not result in favorable outcomes. (BC, FG, 19.7)

To sum up, if the College provides opportunities for the student participants to exercise autonomy, students' involvement in service projects will increase and their learning from Service-Learning projects will be improved.

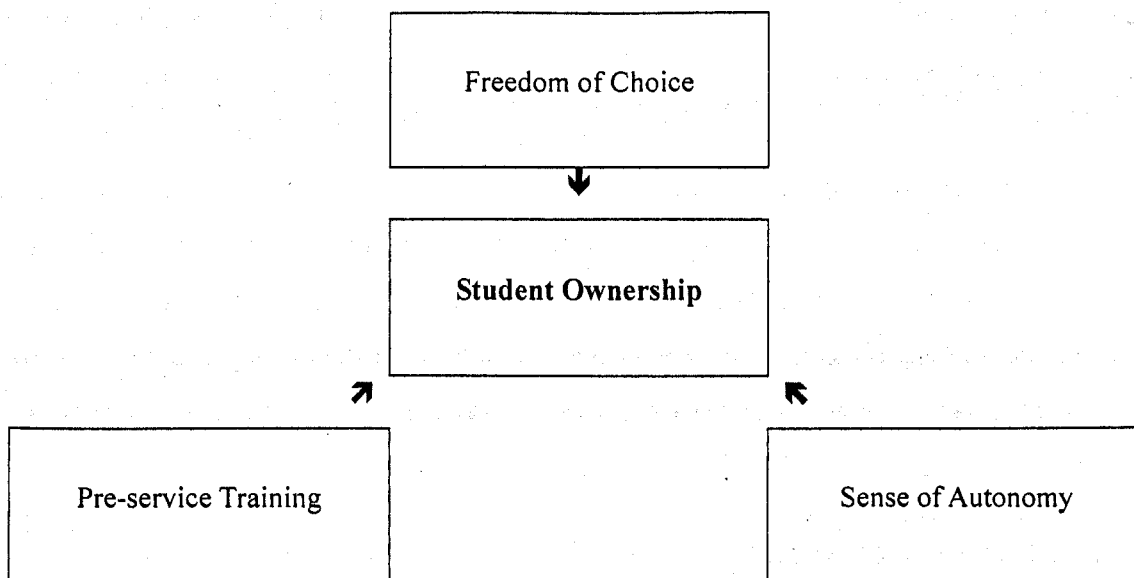
5.4.4 Conclusion

I use the term 'Student Ownership' to describe the situation whereby student participants value their involvement and contribution throughout the Service-Learning process. This is to say that student participants feel that they own the learning experience without external forces to 'push' them to do something.

In this section, I have listed the elements of 'Student Ownership': (1) freedom of choice; (2) pre-service training; and (3) sense of autonomy. These elements are inter-related with each another. The College might provide adequate pre-service training for the student participants, so that they could have confidence and competence in managing the service projects. Based on the training experience, student participants have developed their competence in selecting Service-Learning opportunities to fit their learning needs. Some student participants, especially those with rich volunteer service experience, might have the need to exercise autonomy in the Service-Learning process.

The relationship between the three elements could be illustrated as: (Figure 5.2)

Figure 5.2 : Student Ownership in Service-Learning Process



As shown in **Figure 5.1** (p.90), my conceptual framework, 'Ownership' is in fact part of the students' service experience. In the data analysis, I have attempted to make clear the elements contributing to student ownership.

5.5 Role of Service Coordinator/ Mentor

In Chapter 3, the importance of the service coordinator/ mentor in the Service-Learning implementation has been identified and discussed. Based on the informants' responses, I can conclude that service coordinators/ mentors play a variety of roles in facilitating the implementation of Service-Learning projects, and more importantly, they are involved in facilitating learning through Service-Learning.

5.5.1 Advisor

The primary role of the service coordinator/ mentor from the College is as an 'advisor'. This is especially common for the Service-Learning projects which are initiated by the student participants. The service coordinators/ mentors take up the relatively passive role of providing advice to the Service-Learning project leaders (student participants).

AY of Student Development Centre, plays a relatively passive role. He just provides support and ideas if necessary. He would not involve himself so much in the service projects. (BC, FG, 19.7)

As discussed in the last section, a sense of autonomy felt by the student participants can enhance their learning. A minimal role as 'advisor' can make the student participants feel that they can do their best and 'own' the Service-Learning experience. In addition, they also feel support from the College since AY provides continuous support to them by acting as an advisor.

5.5.2 Coordinator

The 'coordinator' role means that the service coordinators/ mentors take action in matching the service projects with the participants. They also act as the 'go-between' in communication between the service organization, the College and the student participants.

The coordinator role. They (service coordinators) assist students to fulfill the service hour requirements through coordination with external bodies in provision of training and service opportunities. (LS, SII, 19.10)

The coordinator role cannot be replaced as the student participants might not have the experience and formal position in connecting themselves with external social service organizations in developing Service-Learning projects.

5.5.3 Information Provider

Information provider is the role of providing necessary information for the student participants.

I suggest that the role of the College in Service-Learning implementation is 'information provider'. This means that the College provides information about Service-Learning opportunities and records our participation in Service-Learning.

The information provider role can be seen as part of the 'advisor' role where the service coordinators/ mentors provide basic information to allow student participants to plan and design the projects using their own effort.

5.5.4 Leader

At the beginning of the Service-Learning process, some informants suggest that the service coordinators/ mentors should take up the 'leader' role. This leader role provides more concrete and clear direction as the basis for the development of Service-Learning projects.

At the beginning, AY gave us a clear direction and led us on the right track. We discussed and planned together and we refined our planning. Then we went through the growth process and we gained self-confidence in managing the Social Service Group. (GC, FG, 19.7)

From this perspective, the service coordinators/ mentors would change according to the stage of development of the Service-Learning project group. It can be observed that when the student participants become more mature, the role played by the service coordinators/ mentors can be reduced, from active to passive, from leading to supportive role.

5.5.5 Trainer

As discussed in Section 5.4.2, pre-service training is important in preparing participants to be involved in Service-Learning projects. Thus, it is necessary for the service coordinators/ mentors to take up the 'trainer' role. They should try to find out the training needs of the participants and provide appropriate training opportunities for them.

I think the teachers could train or brief students on the ways of finding appropriate Service-Learning opportunities. The psychological preparation of the students is

very important for students' lack of life experience. Once students are prepared, they could be more confident in participating in Service-Learning projects. (KS, SII, 27.10)

To sum up, the service coordinators/ mentors need to take multiple roles in the Service-Learning implementation process. The roles taken up by the service coordinators/ mentors depend on the maturity and readiness of the participants. From this perspective, the service coordinators/ mentors should understand the student participants in-depth.

Moreover, even though the student participants will expect autonomy in selecting Service-Learning opportunities and decision making in planning and implementation of service projects, the service coordinators/ mentors have to keep close contact with the student participants, and provide relevant and continuous support to them.

5.6 Benefits of Service-Learning for Students

According to the informants, the benefits of Service-Learning projects have been identified and confirmed. In my conceptual framework (**Figure 3.7**, p.54), it was suggested that the impact of Service-Learning on the individual learner is: (1) citizenship behaviors; (2) interpersonal development; (3) personal development and (4) intellectual development.

5.6.1 Citizenship Behaviors

Citizenship behaviors include three concepts. The first is social responsibility and is considered the first step toward participatory citizenship (Eyler & Giles, 1999). The definition of social responsibility includes viewing oneself as part of the solution to a social problem, adhering to the view that change is necessary, and expressing the importance of volunteering (ibid, 1999). The second concept focuses on what Moely et al. (2002b) refer to as civic action or the intent to become involved in future service activities (Eyler & Giles, 1999). The third concept focuses on post-programme civic involvement.

The following quotes from the informants demonstrate their learning and benefits in this category.

Helping people

Service-Learning is by nature a kind of community service. The participants (students) experience the impact of their actions on the service users.

In the process, I could facilitate the service user to think more thoroughly about his life story. His missing parts could be filled in the interaction process. He can differentiate what is important and what is not important to him. (DL, SII, 23.3)

In the service process, DL had facilitated the service user to spell out and review his life story. The meaning of 'helping' in the 'Life Story' project is to help the service user to value his or her contribution to society. Students like DL will pay attention to listening to the service user's voice, so as to have better understanding of the society and social change throughout the individual's life process.

In my experience, they (service users) want to learn more updated knowledge, so they could communicate with family members more easily. The hosting social service organization suggests that the class would provide entertainment and learning for the old people. (TKY, SII, 14.7)

The positive effect of the Service-Learning process on service users will enhance the student participant to develop a sense of achievement. It will induce student participants' involvement in further volunteer service participation.

To sum up, the Service-Learning process provides a positive experience for the student participants. The outcomes of the service projects induce student participants to be aware of their social responsibility to take care of those people in need.

Reflection on social phenomena

The involvement in Service-Learning projects provides the real situation for student

participants to examine and reflect on social phenomena encountered throughout the Service-Learning process.

Such (Service-Learning) experience will facilitate students in post-secondary education to understand the society in a critical and reflective way. The cost is not high but students could learn what could be applied to the rest of their life! (DL, SII, 23.3)

As DL says, the Service-Learning process will help student participants to think critically and reflectively on the social phenomena, such as problems and difficulties faced by old people.

In my reflection, I find that our previous Chief Executive of government, Mr. Tung, is not good in leading and managing the government, but he managed to provide more benefits for the elderly. Whereas, our present Chief Executive, Mr. Tsang, did nothing good to the elderly. I felt upset when I contacted with the service users in the service opportunity. I just reflect on what can the young people do with the elderly. In their present situations, they are facing financial difficulties, health problems and other problems. ... I understand more on the implications of elderly policies toward elderly needs. (GC, FG, 19.7)

After participating in service projects for old people, GC has shown greater concern and understanding towards old people. She commented on social policies for old people. This demonstrates a sense of social consciousness to the society.

Understanding different cultures

The exposure and connection with service users (mainly old people) in the Service-Learning experience, enables students to have better understanding of the values, needs and culture of the service user groups. By culture, I mean the shared values and pattern of behaviors among a particular group of people, for example, elderly people, teenagers, low income group etc.

The service opportunities allow student participants to initiate contact with different

service user groups. In the student participants' daily life, they do not have the experience of making contact with such a variety of service user groups.

Service-Learning opportunities would facilitate students to experience and to explore more on the service users' needs and expectations. Service-Learning experience seems to be much better than just listen to lecturers' teaching in the classroom. Students' actual experience would stimulate them to reflect on their learning. Such experience is more solid and useful to full time students. (LS, SII, 19.10)

The experience in Service-Learning is different from that in classroom learning. The exposure to 'real' cases in the service setting is much more 'realistic' and it leads to great impact on the student participants.

We have been socialized that elderly are weak in thinking and taking action. Their mobility and response are also limited. Through the service process, we could have a more comprehensive understanding of elderly. (PYL, SII, 17.10)

Through direct and continuous contact with the service users, the student participants observe, listen to and experience the service users' way of life, the problems and difficulties faced by them, and their expectations on life. The student participants act like anthropologists and are exposed to the service users' worldview. Such meaningful contacts also challenge student participants' biased or preconceived ideas of the service user groups.

Reflection of own roles in society

As a citizen, one should have understanding and identification of his or her own roles in society. Such roles include: contribution to society, fighting for justice and resources for the needy, etc. The Service-Learning experience helps the participants to re-examine their roles and function. This is especially important for post-secondary students of any discipline.

I learned from the service users (old people) concerning their need for care from

others. I become more empathetic with old people's situations. They are the group being ignored by the majority in the society. ... In talking with elderly, my life experience would be enriched. I just listen to their words and I will learn from them in various aspects. Their life experience stimulates me to think about my life and my position in the society. They are treasure of the society. (GC, FG, 19.7)

To conclude, Service-Learning experiences provide rich opportunities for participants to exercise their citizenship behaviors. Such experiences can act as a foundation for participants to be involved in social justice in the future.

5.6.2 Interpersonal Development

Interpersonal development includes developing an ability to work well with others (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Under this category, two benefits are identified: (1) interpersonal skills; and (2) leadership and teamwork.

Interpersonal skills

Through in-depth connection with service users, the students' interpersonal skills and competencies in relating with people are improved.

I also have learned to be enthusiastic in treating service users. ... I need to let the service users feel that we have a heart to serve them. I have a chance to develop and maintain trustful relationship with service users. (BC, FG, 19.7)

... (student participants) could learn more about the ways in communicating with others. They could not only learn how to communicate with service users, but also learn how to communicate with partners with different background. (PYL, SII, 17.10)

We are IT students. One of the general characteristics of IT students is lack of social skills in relating to strangers. ... In the process of teaching and leading the group, I learned more about the ways to express myself in facing a number of people. ... If I could not overcome the obstacles in communication, I would be failed in many occasions. (TKY, SII, 14.7)

Another benefit of Service-Learning is to develop student participants' patient attitude and attentive behavior. They have to become a good listener to listen to service users' needs and voice.

Besides, I have learned how to be a good listener to listen to the 'life story' of the service user. (DL, SII, 23.3)

From the above, it is agreed by the student participants that the Service-Learning experiences allow them to learn, to practice and develop their interpersonal skills and positive attitudes in relating with their service users and other related persons. In the service process, all the student participants have to interact with service users. The service experience provides a natural setting for them to develop social skills from the experience.

Leadership and teamwork

In the process of Service-Learning, participants have to work in a project team to plan, design, coordinate, implement and evaluate (review) the service projects. As an experiential learning process, participants could develop leadership skills and collaborative skills in teamwork.

In the past, I studied and worked alone. In this Social Service Group, I learned that the capacity and power of the individual is limited. The way to communicate and motivate people in a comfortable manner is a big lesson for me to learn. (BC, FG, 19.7)

The necessity for teamwork is a product of the Service-Learning process. Some student participants took up the leadership roles and they have to manage the project team. The service coordinators/ mentors also took up the advisor role to facilitate student participants to review and amend students' practice from time to time. Skills and competence in leading and team building would be developed in the Service-Learning process.

5.6.3 Personal Development

Personal development is concerned with “how students view themselves” (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p.25). This includes gaining insight into career goals, experiencing the helping of others as a rewarding endeavor, and achieving self-efficacy defined by “feeling that what one can make a difference” (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p.38).

In the present research context, the following areas of benefits are identified: (1) self-confidence; (2) learn to be flexible; (3) reflection on self; and (4) sense of satisfaction.

Self confidence

In our discussion on the characteristics of students (Section 2.3), I have pointed out that students are relatively weak in self-confidence. Owing to their relatively low academic performance in public examinations, the students’ self concept is not well developed either. In the process of Service-Learning, they could become more confident in managing the service projects and in interaction with others.

In this sense, Service-Learning opportunities and pre-service training on these target groups would be meaningful to our students to have better preparation for their career. Moreover, their self-confidence could be enhanced. (MT, SII, 21.10)

I think the most important impact of the Service-Learning project on me is the improvement in my self-confidence. When I begin to find my job, I should initiate contacts with variety of people. (TKY, SII, 14.7)

In the Service-Learning process, students observe their competence in relating to service users, and they are welcomed and acknowledged by their service users. The improvement in self-confidence is very important for students in managing their life in the future.

Learn to be flexible

The implementation of Service-Learning projects in meeting service users' needs could facilitate student participants to learn to be more flexible in managing people and in managing service projects.

I find that after the service projects, we become more flexible in meeting challenges. We also become more ready in taking remedial action. For example, we have organized a service in an aged home in Homantin. The microphone and PA system of the aged home did not work. So we should speak loudly throughout the programme.
(GC, FG, 19.7)

The service setting differs from the student participants' daily practice in classroom learning. Students have to prepare themselves to manage unforeseen issues and difficulties. Thus, they learn to be flexible and responsive to such scenarios.

... in my experience, flexibility in selecting and conducting activities, creative use of tools and time are the determinants of success. The selection of what activities, in what degree of difficulties and discussion in what degree of depth depends on the readiness and background of service users. Then, I have learned to be more flexible and responsive to the service users and the service environment. (PYL, SII, 17.10)

In dealing with service users, student participants also have to review and adjust the programme content to meet their needs and the changes in the service environment. The service experiences also enrich student participants' readiness to adjust their work accordingly.

Reflection on self

The Service-Learning process is actually a learning process in which student participants reflect on and re-examine their own values, their pre-conceptions of service users and their own life attitudes. In connection with service users, the student participants have developed capabilities in self understanding. As a result, student participants' positive change in thinking, attitudes and behaviors become

possible.

DL is a 'mature student' and she is about forty years of age. In the past, she was very proud of her rich life experience and she claimed that she knew herself in-depth. In the Service-Learning process, she gained many insights on human nature from interaction with the 'uncle' (service user).

In this Service-Learning experience, the Uncle (service user) could leave the caring and support role to his wife and he took up the breadwinner role in doing his job (working as a sailor and work abroad). ... My experience in the Service-Learning project helps me to explore more the sex role. I have a wider perspective in examining sex role stereotype and my acceptance to other service users had been improved. ... I could recover from lack of trust of men! There are still some good fathers and husbands in the world. (DL, SII, 23.3)

I observed that DL has reviewed her biases or mis-conceptions about sex roles. In fact, DL divorced ten years ago. She revealed that in her childhood, she also faced the divorce of her parents. Being a middle-aged woman with negative experiences from her family relationships, she has lost 'trust' in men. After completing the Service-Learning project, she changed her views on sex roles and family life.

My first experience as volunteer was to assist a group of middle-aged people ... After that, I have changed my attitude towards volunteer service. I would not pay all my attention in working for money. (BC, FG, 19.7)

The psychological gain from the service process seems to be much greater than money (material benefits) from work. Service-Learning is not only to serve people-in-need, but also a way to reflect on student participants' own values. In the past, BC worked hard at weekends to earn money. After participating in Service-Learning projects, he preferred to organize service projects for service users, rather than doing part-time jobs for money. The service projects allowed him to re-examine what is important to him.

I have learned to be patient, to be a person from my heart, and the attitude in facing

people. Being a volunteer, one should be considerate to others' needs. ... we should be patient in thinking and discussing the ways to manage difficulties and conflicts among our group. (EW, FG, 19.7)

EW learned that she should cooperate with others in serving people, in managing the difficulties encountered in the service process. She also learned to be considerate to others' needs.

After each Service-Learning project, I would evaluate and reflect on what has been done well and also my strengths and weaknesses in doing the Service-Learning projects. Such reflection would be an asset for my future practice in social work field. (PYL, SII, 17.10)

Through reflection on the Service-Learning process, through peer review and self-evaluation of their performance in the service process, the student participants have better self knowledge.

Sense of satisfaction

Service-Learning experiences provide a platform for student participants to have a sense of satisfaction. Such a sense of satisfaction is a return for their effort as they observe that it makes changes in service users' lives possible. For example:

Everybody involved in this Service-Learning project has paid great effort in planning, organizing and delivering this project. The outcome of this project is positive and all of us felt very excited and satisfied. (YT, SRJ, 19.7)

In doing the service, I do feel that I am important to the service users. They claimed that there is nobody to care for them and talk to them. My contribution is little, but I create great impact on the service users. They treasure my work much. (GC, FG, 19.7)

As discussed in Chapter 2, the students of the College are lacking a sense of achievement in formal learning. The Service-Learning experiences provide

opportunities for them to experience 'success'. More importantly, the sense of achievement arises from the students' own effort and feedback from others. Such experiences can initiate long-term impact on their self-esteem.

5.6.4 Intellectual Development

Intellectual development, in the context of Service-Learning, can be understood in different ways: (1) "the value added" by service to the learning experience (Eyler & Giles, 1999, p.68) and (2) outcomes that support deeper understanding and application of knowledge (ibid, p.63).

Intellectual development also means the ability to apply theories to the lives of service users. This is a commonly used concept of intellectual development in Service-Learning research (McClam & Harrower, 2003; White, Festa & Allocca, 1999).

Application of learning

The fundamental rationale for implementation of Service-Learning is to facilitate student participants' ability in applying their knowledge in a service setting. In doing so, student participants should have experience in applying their learning in a real situation. Through the experiential learning process, student participants can review their classroom learning and gain deeper understanding. For example:

... new learning would be initiated throughout the process. For example, through direct service with the target groups, I could understand the strengths and limitations of my learning or my application of learning. What kinds of skills and practice theory are suitable for me could be tested and examined. (MT, SII, 21.10)

In the hotline service, ... I could apply counseling skills to help the service users to ventilate their feelings and reduce their stress level. ... The pursuit of the skills learned would strengthen my confidence in dealing with service users. (KS, SII, 27.10)

In implementation of Service-Learning projects, student participants (especially those ADSW students) have the chance to apply what they have learned in practice. They can examine the applicability of the theories learned in the service (practice) setting.

My application of theories has room for improvement. ... It is good to have Service-Learning experience. At the very least, one service programme is essential for students to exercise and pursue their skills in acting as a social worker. ... Service-Learning is a relatively short term service, which would facilitate students to have exposure in different settings and reflect on their skills and values. (PYL, SII, 17.10)

Beside the application of relevant theories in doing the Service-Learning projects, the service opportunities enable the student participants to exercise their practical skills and develop their practice wisdom. For example, PYL (part-time ADSW student) become more responsive in applying micro-skills to meet service users' needs. They can also handle different scenarios more appropriately.

The characteristics of service users and service settings are different from those described in textbooks and classroom learning. In the naturalistic and realistic service environment, student participants can pursue integration of learning in the 'real world'. As a result, they can have better understanding of the limitations and applicability of different theories in their practice situation.

Learning from service users

It was agreed that most of the informants could learn from their service users in different ways. For example, the informants could learn from their experiences to consolidate their own values and classroom learning.

... the objective of the mother in the group is to understand the mentality and thinking of youth in schooling. As a result, the mother could apply what she learned in the group in dealing with her children. ... This experience has changed my mind from one way contribution to mutual contribution by all parties involved. I would learn from the service users in different perspectives. (MT, SII, 21.10)

In addition, new learning can be initiated throughout the interaction process with service users. The service participants gained valuable 'practice wisdom' from their service users.

In talking with old people, you will learn their practice wisdom in daily life. They are in fact 'live dictionary'. The knowledge and wisdom learned from old people are meaningful to me throughout my whole life! (GC, SRJ, 19.7)

On the other hand, student participants can re-examine and reflect on their knowledge of the characteristics of the service user group in-depth. Put into live situations, student participants can articulate the service users' behaviors from different perspectives.

It is quite special that when I started to use the 'Seven Happy Life Styles' in the elderly group, all of the members reported that they know the importance of health. However, they have to be supported by other group members and think in-depth so as to bring out their ideas in applying the concept in their life. (LS, SII, 19.10)

Overall, the Service-Learning projects provide a platform for the student participants to learn new knowledge from the service users' behaviors, values and life experience.

Reflection on social work knowledge

Service-Learning experiences are important for ADSW students. They give them better understanding of social work practice in real life situations and the knowledge in the social work field. Service-Learning projects are in fact pre-service training and learning opportunities for them.

DL (a full-time ADSW student) claimed that she had reflected on social work knowledge throughout the Service-Learning process. Since then, she had a better understanding of the social work profession and her position as a social worker.

I have learned that a man could do much in caring for his wife and daughter. As I

learn in cognitive, affective and behavioral domains, the Uncle has the thinking (cognitive part), so he has the affective part (feeling) and behavioral part (behavior) in acting as a responsible husband and father. ... A person in the elderly life (8th stage of Erikson's development stage) would review and integrate his whole life. (DL, SII, 23.3)

In reflection on the Service-Learning experience, the student participants could relate social work knowledge learned with the societal context. For example:

After attending this project, I have learned that our social policies do not pay sufficient attention to old people in Hong Kong. Although old people have contributed much in the past, they could not enjoy the outcomes (results) of their hard working. (GC, SRJ, 19.7)

The reflection on social work knowledge is not just about trying to apply theory to practice, it is also trying to put theories and learning into the social context. That is to say, the student participants can articulate the life situations of the service users.

Learning technical skills

In addition to applying student participants' learning into the service setting (real life situations), Service-Learning also allows student participants to learn and apply technical skills in programme planning, organizing and use of various facilities. Such technical skills could not really be learned from traditional classroom learning.

(In my Service-Learning experience), I have also learned how to attract donations and how to organize fundraising programmes. I have to find ways of exploring community resources for fundraising. (YT, FG, 19.7)

As the secretary of the Social Service Group, I have learned the ways to take minutes, preparing agenda, proposals and reports. ... I have also learned how to lead a group and how to lead a game or an activity. (EW, FG, 19.7)

The service setting provides a platform for me to demonstrate my strengths in

managing equipment (such as digital camera, microphone, public address system, photocopier etc.). (BC, FG, 19.7)

Learning is facilitated based on the student participants' needs in the implementation of Service-Learning projects. The practice settings provide constructive learning environment for them to pursue new skills (technical and programme skills) wherever necessary.

5.6.5 Conclusion

In reviewing informants' responses in their reflective journal, focus group and individual interviews, the benefits of Service-Learning were identified. These findings support the argument that Service-Learning could help student participants to learn from new (service) experience, to explore their own strengths and weaknesses, to develop self-confidence, leadership skills and social skills and integrate classroom learning into real life situations.

In the next section, I will examine the informants' ideas and suggestions for improving the qualities of Service-Learning implementation in the College.

5.7 Policy and Structure Issues in Service-Learning Delivery

As we examine the Service-Learning projects of the College in more detail, we find that the projects under examination were not well-organized. From the informants' viewpoints, there is room for improvement in Service-Learning implementation in the College.

In this section, informants' viewpoints are presented and examined. Based on these viewpoints, I have been able to develop a better (or more appropriate) model for the implementation of Service-Learning in the College in Chapter 7.

5.7.1 Coordination among Different Parties

In DL's case, the Service-Learning project was operated by the Nursing Department

of a local university. According to DL, the coordination and operation of the project was far from satisfactory, although DL gained much from participating in the project.

There is need to strengthen the coordination and administrative effort of the hosting organization. ... In fact, there is no briefing to the service users. They do not know what the service (life story making) for. As a result, misunderstanding among service users and volunteers will negatively influence the outcomes of the service. (DL, SII, 23.3)

KS suggested that the College could take a more directive and active role in coordinating with service organizations. As a result, the students involved could explore and identify suitable Service-Learning opportunities in a more effective and efficient way.

The College should take a coordination role in lining up social service organizations with students. Mutual understanding of the scope and content of Service-Learning projects would facilitate students in participating and benefiting from the projects. ... The College could have connection with the social service organizations, so that students could find their Service-Learning opportunities more easily. (KS, SII, 27.10)

It is suggested that both the College and/or hosting organization should take an active role in coordinating with different parties: service organizations, the College, students and service users. Such arrangements would facilitate a more effective delivery of Service-Learning projects. Further discussion of the operation of Service-Learning projects would be found in **Section 7.5** of Chapter 7.

5.7.2 Staff Involvement

Despite student participants' preference for freedom in selecting Service-Learning projects and autonomy in planning and designing service projects (**Section 5.4**), staff (academic and non-academic staff) involvement in the Service-Learning implementation process is also considered to be essential in most situations.

Accessibility of staff

First of all, staff members either from service organization or from the College should be accessible to the student participants. Accessibility means that student participants have effective and formal channels for making connection with the staff members. In DL's case, the performance of the staff in the service project was quite disappointing:

... the coordinator of the hosting organization did not provide the mobile phone number to the volunteers. She just provided the office phone number but I could never ever find her in the office hours. One way communication would lead to a sense of insecurity and lack of support as felt by the volunteers. (DL, SII, 23.3)

If the staff members are not accessible, they could not provide the basic (minimal) support to student participants. Thus, the outcome and quality of the service project would not be ensured.

Follow up action

After completion of a Service-Learning project, it is suggested that formal evaluation and follow up action (wherever necessary) should be taken to review the process of service delivery and student participants' learning.

... no follow up action, for example, evaluation meeting, sharing etc. is taken. The experience in working with the hosting organization is so 'bad' and I remind myself not to become a service coordinator like this forever! (DL, SII, 23.3)

In DL's case, there is no follow up action taken (such as evaluation meeting, sharing) by the staff members who are responsible for the service project. In such a situation, the student participant could not consolidate his or her Service-Learning experience nor identify the new learning arising from the service experience for future practice.

Staff involvement of hosting social service organization

Basically, even in the case of allowing student participants to have greater autonomy in managing Service-Learning projects, responsible staff members' involvement in monitoring the progress of service delivery is crucial to the success of Service-Learning projects.

In the SoulTalk project, the professional staff in the centre did not advise me what to do in handling the situation. As a result, I felt helpless in managing the phone call. Although I have applied the counseling skills learned in school, I do feel that the support from the agency is not enough. (KS, SII, 27.10)

Support from professional staff in the service setting influences the quality and outcome of the Service-Learning projects. In addition, the staff members also act as role models for the student participants to learn and reflect on the service experience.

I have the feeling that the workers (in the service organization) would not manage the store room and just put the burden on the volunteers. They presented themselves so relaxed and they did nothing to instruct or guide the volunteers' work. I queried about whether we served the service users or served the workers. (GC, FG, 19.7)

Staff members' attitude gave GC a negative feeling. In the focus group, GC claimed that she will never involve herself in any service projects in this organization in the future.

The above negative cases suggest that staff members' attitudes will affect the Service-Learning experience and so the outcome of the projects.

5.7.3 Resources Support

The hosting organization or the College should have the responsibilities in supporting the operation and implementation of service projects. In this sense, adequate resource allocation to and investment in the service projects is needed.

Financial support

According to the informants, the financial support from the College in implementation of Service-Learning projects is limited. Thus, student participants should organize fundraising programmes to finance the service projects.

I have also learned how to attract donation and how to organize fundraising programme. I have to find ways of exploring community resources for fundraising. (YT, GF, 19.7)

In the eyes of the student participants, it seems that there should be more resources for the implementation of Service-Learning projects. The senior management of the College should therefore, take into careful consideration, the resources allocated for Service-Learning.

Physical environment & facilities

Like financial resources, student participants claimed that the physical environment and facilities provided for Service-Learning projects are not sufficient for the effective delivery of service projects.

In the venue, we found that some of the equipment and facilities were not prepared. This made us very upset. Eventually, we had to sing without music in the group singing session. This was one of the most unforgettable issues in my life! (YT, SRJ, 19.7)

We also need an activity room for our meeting. Perhaps, we could share with other group for the room but a room reserved for our meeting would facilitate our work. (BC, FG, 19.7)

From the above quotes, I found that student participants' quest for physical environment and facilities might not be caused by the service organization or the College's lack of resources. Rather, it might be due to lack of coordination among different parties. Furthermore, the priority of the Service-Learning projects in the

eyes of the senior management and/ or service organizations seems to be an issue for discussion. In Chapter 6, I will examine this issue according to staff members' point of views.

Proper policies and procedures

The clarity of the policy and procedures guiding the Service-Learning implementation will influence the process and outcomes of the service projects. If the policy and procedures are not well-formulated, problem issues will be found. For example:

... there is no service manual or other written (reference) materials to illustrate the flow and procedures in conducting the life story interview. ... The issue of confidentiality could be hardly kept in a good way. In addition, the service coordinator did not provide any consent form and the like, to ask for the Uncle's consent in the service process. ... The procedure of the hosting organization is so unclear and unethical in this sense. (DL, SII, 23.3)

DL was upset by the lack of guidelines in implementation of the 'Life Story' project. She claimed that she will never ever get involved in service projects organized by this hosting organization again. In spite of having learned much in the Service-Learning process, she also suffered from lack of guidelines throughout the process.

The above issues were identified by some of the informants. It was suggested that sufficient resources and support would formulate a much firmer foundation for the development of Service-Learning initiatives.

5.7.4 Platform for Student Development and Reflection

The term 'Service-Learning' can be elaborated in different ways. Sigmon (1996) attempted to provide a more precise definition of Service-Learning through a typology that compares different programmes that combine service and learning. This typology broadened his earlier 'reciprocal learning' definition to include the notion that 'Service-Learning' occurs when there is a balance between learning

goals and service outcomes (Figure 3.1, p.28). According to my discussion on Service-Learning, both 'Service' and 'Learning' are emphasized.

In this section, a platform for student development and reflection is identified as being essential support from the College. The 'platform' provides the opportunities for student participants to learn and to develop themselves through reflection.

Training

As discussed in Section 5.4.2, pre-service/ post-service training and other kind of training are identified as necessary for the success of Service-Learning projects. This statement is based on the fact that, through training workshops and briefing/debriefing sessions and the like, the student participants would be well-prepared in facing the challenges from the service setting. In return, the student participants develop self-confidence to 'own' their Service-Learning experience. Thus, training should be provided in meeting the needs of the participants, rather than be a 'daily routine' in implementation of Service-Learning projects.

In training the volunteers, tailor-made training (considering the learning pace of the learner) is much better than formalized (standardized) training. I have to know the background, his or her social context of the service user, in order to facilitate my 'life story' work. (DL, SII, 23.3)

I prefer to have training after service. In the debriefing session, AY or other staff could pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of our performance in the service process. Through self reflection and peer review, we could learn more on each other's competence and shortcoming. Post-service training would facilitate our learning as it aims at fulfilling our real training needs. (BC, FG, 19.7)

Different groups of student participants might have different training needs in participating in Service-Learning projects. So the College should develop a training policy to cater for specific training needs of the student participants.

Development of student support network

DL suggested that in order to be effective in delivery of Service-Learning projects and facilitation of students' learning, a network of linking volunteers together has to be developed by the hosting organization.

... a network to link volunteers together is also important. Sharing sessions among volunteers will enhance the volunteers' sense of satisfaction and motivation to participate in Service-Learning projects. They will become more willing to participate in other service project as they think that the service experience is meaningful and worthwhile to them. (DL, SII, 23.3)

Further to DL's suggestion, students with experience in Service-Learning would become the core members in promoting Service-Learning projects.

5.7.5 Improvement in Curriculum Design

The academic workload of ADSW programme is found to be too heavy for students to have time and space to participate in Service-Learning projects. For example, KS and PYL shared this view:

The curriculum of ADSW programme is heavy. If students are required to do Service-Learning, the demand on students is too much! My concern is time-constraint. (KS, SII, 27.10)

Our problem is that we have to attend class in the semesters, and we have to negotiate with our employers concerning the night duties. ... As a result, we don't have much time to participate in Service-Learning projects. (PYL, SII, 17.10)

On the other hand, since Service-Learning experience is the core or compulsory element for students' graduation, ADSW students need to participate in Service-Learning projects. These two forces would lead to students' higher stress level in participating in Service-Learning projects. In responding to the above-named situation, it was suggested that there should have better planning in implementation

of Service-Learning initiative. In addition, Service-Learning projects could be arranged in time slots that are more feasible for students to attend.

Service-Learning could be organized in weekends. If students know that they would gain much in participating in Service-Learning projects, they would have higher motivation to participate. (LS, SII, 19.10)

If the arrangement of Service-Learning projects could fit the students' time slots and the training workshops are more relevant (in the eyes of students), students would be more willing to participate in Service-Learning projects.

5.8 Summary of the Chapter

In this Chapter, I have displayed my analysis of the data taken from student informants. It was found that four dimensions of the benefits of Service-Learning projects were identified: citizenship behaviors, interpersonal development, personal development and intellectual development.

According to the data, student participants' perception of Service-Learning experience varies according to their background. In fact, it was found that the College did not have clear policies and procedures on implementing the Service-Learning initiative. For example, Service-Learning in some academic programmes such as ADSW is found to be developed in a much systematic way, whereas, I could not find Service-Learning projects organized for students of other academic programmes. The allocation of resources in terms of personnel, money and material resources seems inadequate in the eyes of the student participants.

To ensure the success of Service-Learning, the student participants and the service coordinators/ mentors play a vital role in the Service-Learning implementation process. For the student participants, if they could have a sense of ownership of the service projects, their motivation, performance and so their learning in the Service-Learning process could be reinforced.

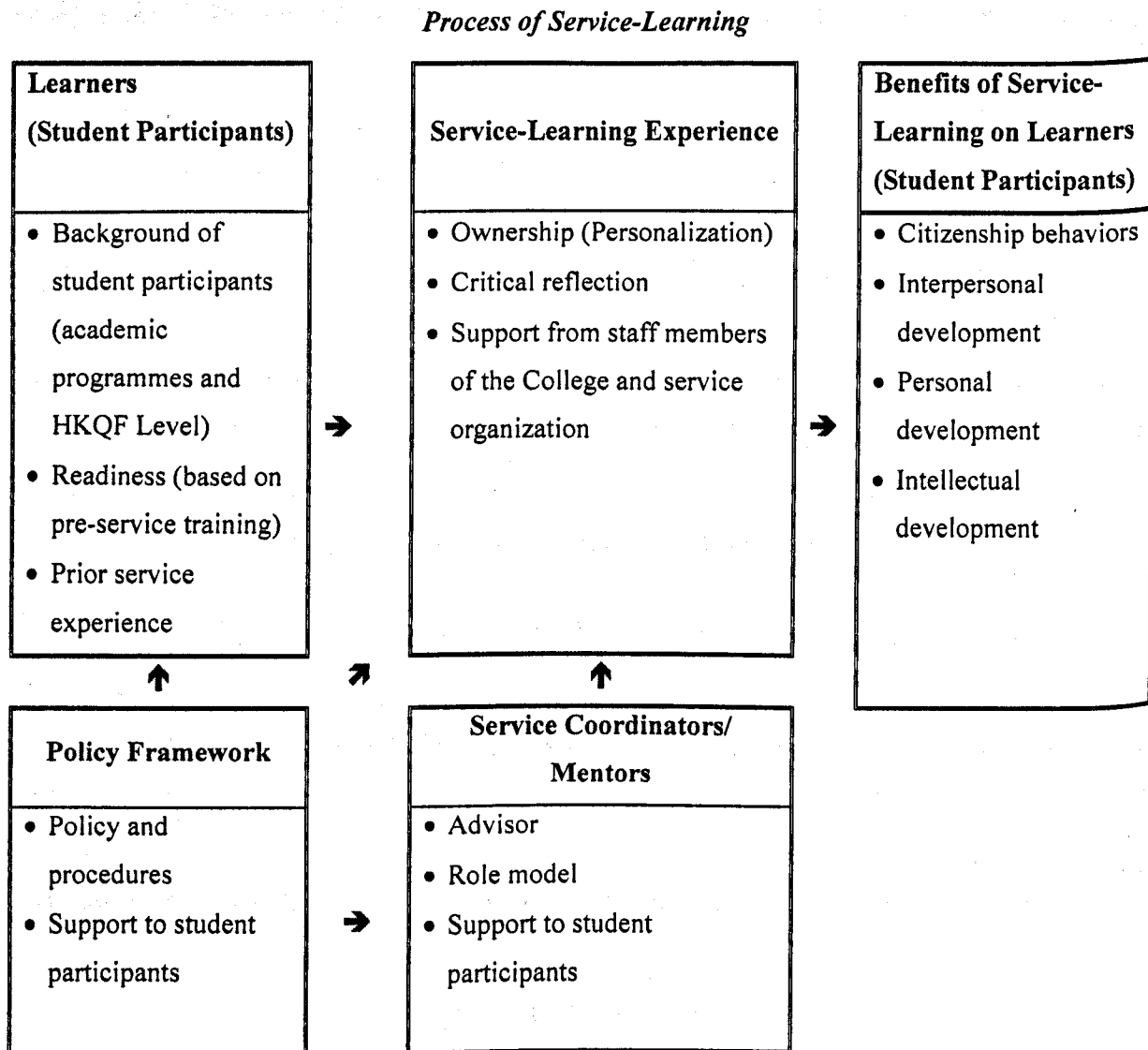
For the service coordinators/ mentors, they have to assist the student participants to

develop a sense of ownership of their Service-Learning opportunities. First of all, they should allow student participants to have freedom of choice in selecting opportunities. Secondly, pre-service training based on student participants' needs should be provided. Lastly, they should promote a sense of autonomy in the student participants through giving advice and support to them.

One of the key findings is the importance of the policy and structure developed for the implementation of the Service-Learning initiative. Most of the student informants suggested that the College should provide support to Service-Learning. That is to say, a relevant organizational 'policy framework' in terms of policy, structure and procedures should be developed to guide the development of Service-Learning initiative for the benefits of students' learning.

In reviewing the conceptual framework grounded in my literature review (**Section 3.6**), I intend to add a new element, the 'policy framework' developed and defined by the College to facilitate the development of Service-Learning in the organizational context. A revised framework could be developed as follows: (**Figure 5.3**)

Figure 5.3 : Revised Framework for Development of Service-Learning



Further discussion on the revised conceptual framework will be displayed in Chapter 7. In the next chapter, Chapter 6, we will discuss the analysis of the data from staff informants from the College.

Chapter 6 Data Presentation and Analysis – Staff Members' Views

6.1 Introduction

After looking at the data from student participants in the College, in this chapter, I will display the data collected from staff members (two staff members from Student Development Centre and a lecturer of Associate Degree in Social Work).

The choice of the staff members is based on their work in relation to Service-Learning development and implementation. Generally speaking, they are all service coordinators/ mentors of Service-Learning projects. At present, there is no centralized department/ unit in designing, promoting and developing Service-Learning, though Service-Learning is seen in the College as a means to enhance students' learning and civic responsibility. The staff members interviewed have been involved in Service-Learning projects for students at different academic (HKQF) levels and discipline.

6.2 Brief Description of Informants (Staff)

6.2.1 AY

AY is a senior Student Development Officer, who is responsible for students' affairs and development in the Ma On Shan (MOS) Campus. He mainly serves the students studying at HKQF level 3 and above (that is professional diploma, diploma, higher diploma and associate degree).

One of his major tasks is organizing Service-Learning projects for the students. Attempts at Service-Learning implementation include organizing a campus-wide Social Service Group, individual Service-Learning projects in collaboration with academic programmes and social service organizations nearby.

6.2.2 KKN

KKN is a former Student Development Officer, she was responsible for students of Project Yi Jin (HKQF level 2¹⁹). Under her planning and supervision, a voluntary group has been developed to promote volunteerism among the students.

6.2.3 SNH

SNH is a lecturer on the Associate Degree in Social Work. He is also the pioneer and founder in introducing Service-Learning to the College. The first draft of the Service-Learning proposal was developed through his effort. In this sense, he has expertise in the promotion of Service-Learning.

A summary of the description of the staff members interviewed is as follows:

Table 6.1 : Profile of Informants (Staff) and their participation in the Data Collection Process

Name (Code)	Position & Major Duties	Department/ Unit in the College	Role in Service-Learning Implementation
KKN	Student Development Officer	Student Development Centre	Act as service coordinator of Service-Learning for students studying academic programmes at HKQF Level 2
AY	Student Development Officer	Student Development Centre	Act as service coordinator of Service-Learning for students studying academic programmes at HKQF Level 3 and above
SNH	Lecturer	Associate Degree programme in Social Work (ADSW)	Act as service coordinator of Service-Learning for students studying ASW programme

¹⁹ Please refer to Section 2.2.3 (p.13).

6.3 Role of Service Coordinator/ Mentor

In Chapter 5, the student participants' perceived role of service coordinator/ mentor in the Service-Learning implementation has been identified and discussed. In this chapter, I will display and discuss the service coordinator/ mentor's self perception of their role in the Service-Learning process.

6.3.1 Advisor

As perceived by the student participants, the staff members of the College also identified their roles as an advisor.

... taking up an advisor role is also my work. I would back up the volunteers when they tried to present the basic knowledge and skills in working with people with mental handicap. (KKN, SII, 13.6)

The role of advisor would facilitate students' learning through providing space for the students to explore, to design and to experience the Service-Learning process by their own effort.

6.3.2 Coordinator

Acting as a service coordinator/ mentor, the staff members would coordinate different people in the Service-Learning process. SNH described the role in a dynamic way.

Service-Learning coordinator is acting as a 'dancer' role, where all parties in Service-Learning process, including students of the College, academic staff, hosting social service organizations and service users, would be partners in the dancing process. Action would be taken in responding to different parties' pace and needs. Different models of operation and style of working would be possible, just as dancing in different styles and pace of partners. (SNH, SII, 24.10)

6.3.3 Leader and Trainer

Apart from taking relatively passive roles such as advisor and coordinator, staff members will also play a more active role such as that of leader depending on the maturity of the student participants.

SNH suggests that staff members should take up a more directive leader role for beginners in Service-Learning projects. For experienced students, the staff members' leader role seems less important.

Social work teachers should place more effort in leading and facilitating social work students from lowest level to higher level of participation. ... For beginners in Service-Learning, academic staff's leading and directing role is important and appropriate. For final year students, academic staff's role and involvement could be reduced. (SNH, SII, 24.10)

In fact, in taking the leader role, the staff members should also take up the trainer role to equip students with appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes.

(I have to act as the) trainer of the workshop on understanding service user and service skills. (KNN, SII, 13.6)

6.3.4 Project Manager and Facilitator

Unlike organizing volunteer work in a more general sense, service coordinators (staff members) involved in students' Service-Learning projects are taking up dual roles as project manager and facilitator. On the one hand, the staff members should ensure the qualities of the Service-Learning projects in meeting service users' needs (project manager). On the other hand, they should also facilitate students' learning in the process to meet students' learning needs (facilitator).

I would use the term 'project manager' to describe the role of Service-Learning coordinator. After appropriate assessment on students' learning needs, a Service-Learning coordinator would not arrange all Service-Learning opportunities for the

students. Rather, he or she would try to facilitate students to select or create the Service-Learning opportunities and to facilitate students' reflection on their learning in the Service-Learning process. ... Social work teachers should place more effort in leading and facilitating social work students from lowest level to higher level of participation. ... Academic staff could encourage students to reflect not only on their success in Service-Learning, but also their failure and loss. (SNH, SII, 24.10)

The facilitator role is important in the Service-Learning process. Emphasis on students' learning in the Service-Learning process is the distinctive feature in the Service-Learning practice.

6.3.5 Conclusion

Staff members' self-perceived roles in the Service-Learning process are identified: advisor, coordinator, leader, trainer, project manager and facilitator. SNH's conclusion of the perceived roles can represent the situation.

In conclusion, Service-Learning coordinator should bear in mind the dual emphasis of task (service) goals and process (learning) goals in the Service-Learning process. Service-Learning should be operated under the contextualized project management process. If multi-disciplinary collaboration is not available, dual emphasis of task goals and process goals is also important. (SNH, SII, 24.10)

6.4 Benefits of Service-Learning for Students

Under the Eyler and Giles' framework (1999) as discussed in **Section 3.6** (p.48), the benefits of Service-Learning projects for students as identified by staff informants are:

6.4.1 Citizenship Behaviors

In the Service-Learning process, student participants have to move away from their daily life experience and make connection with different service user groups. As a result, they have the opportunities to understand different cultures of the society.

At the very least, they (student participants) could have more life experience in relating to different cultures. (AY, SII, 14.7)

6.4.2 Interpersonal Development

In this area, the staff members interviewed focus on the student participants' improvement in interpersonal skills, leadership and teamwork. In the Service-Learning process, direct contact with service users provide a platform for student participants to pursue their social skills.

Throughout the (Service-Learning) process, they (student participants) are motivated to change their attitudes towards people. ... For those students with limited social skills and inappropriate life attitudes, that is, the so-called 'Hong Kong Women' or 'Railway Men', the service exposure would enhance their competences in relating to others. (AY, SII, 14.7)

In addition, Service-Learning requires student participants to work as a team in the planning, implementation and evaluation process. It can facilitate students to develop their leadership skills and teamwork spirits throughout the process.

(Service-Learning) also helps the volunteers to develop their leadership skills and to be more open-minded. ... They become more open and their acceptance to others is also found improved. They are willing to commit themselves in providing services. (KKN, SII, 13.6)

Although most of the core members are in the same class, the Service-Learning experience would help them to cooperate with each another smoothly. They appreciated each other's strengths and acceptance among themselves was improved. (AY, SII, 14.7)

Moreover, in the Service-Learning process, students from different academic programmes can collaborate to conduct Service-Learning projects and learn from each another. They can contribute themselves best in the service settings which are

different from classroom learning.

... they (student participants) could collaborate with students from other discipline in conducting Service-Learning projects. (SNH, SII, 24.10)

To conclude, staff members view Service-Learning projects as a platform allowing and requiring students to develop and practice leadership skills and teamwork.

6.4.3 Personal Development

Staff members of the College identified that students are in need of developing themselves to adjust to the ever-changing environment of the society. In meeting the students' needs in personal development, staff members suggest that Service-Learning can enhance students' qualities in the following areas:

Self confidence

Under staff members' supervision and advice, student participants could develop skills and competences in facing challenges from Service-Learning projects. As a result, their self-confidence has been improved.

They have more confidence in planning, organizing and implementing service projects. In the later stage, they just report their progress and did not need me to intervene much on their work. ... However, for our students with low self-esteem and academic abilities, this kind of Service-Learning projects would enhance their self confidence. (AY, SII, 14.7)

Reflection on self

Staff members found that in the Service-Learning process, students can review their own values on different groups in the society. In addition, students can find and examine their bias (if any) on the group they served.

I also observed that there were changes in life attitudes in our students. After

knowing that it was luxury for a physically handicapped person to walk freely, our students would reflect and examine their life attitudes and values. (AY, SII, 14.7)

Moreover, the Service-Learning process is valuable to students as they can learn what they can not learn in the ordinary classroom setting.

In any Service-Learning experience, both successful and unsuccessful experiences are lessons and assets for students. They could learn much in the reflection process with the guidance of academic staff. (SNH, SII, 24.10)

6.4.4 Intellectual Development

Finally, the staff members also observe that student participants can have improvement in intellectual capabilities through Service-Learning process.

Basically, student participants have to apply what they learned in classroom teaching in the Service-Learning process.

Students would benefit from applying their academic learning into service setting. (AY, SII, 14.7)

Moreover, staff members suggest that the Service-Learning process is an interactional process whereby students and service users can be benefited. On the one hand, students provide support and service to service users. On the other hand, student participants can learn from service users in different aspects.

She stated that when talking to the service user, she could feel and imagine the living of the service user. In many service opportunities, not only volunteers provide service to the target service users, the service users will serve (educate) the volunteers in return. (AY, SII, 14.7)

6.5 Policy and Structure Issues in Service-Learning Delivery

In the analysis of staff members' responses, I found that staff members interviewed identified with the positive values of Service-Learning for student participants. In their experience in promotion and delivery of Service-Learning projects, they have also faced difficulties which hindered their work. Most of the difficulties come from organizational structure and policy issues. To ensure the work of Service-Learning in enhancing students' learning and the continuity of service opportunities, staff members have recommendations to the organization, the College.

In this section, I will present and analyze staff members' ideas in relation to the organizational context.

6.5.1 Readiness of Student Participants

Throughout the Service-Learning implementation process, staff members encountered various difficulties. Some of the difficulties came from the organizational structure and policies. Others came from the readiness and qualities of the student participants. In this section, I will explore the issues in relation to students' qualities.

Commitment

Based on the characteristics of the students, Service-Learning projects are delivered in different academic levels in different ways. For Project Yi Jin programme, students participated in Service-Learning projects on a voluntary basis. The responsible Student Development Officer, KNN found that students lack commitment to service projects.

The volunteers' initiative and commitment in the service projects are not enough. They participated in the (service planning) meeting with low attendance rate. (KNN, SII, 13.6)

In KNN's views, students with higher level of commitment can manage the service

projects well. Whereas, students' lack of commitment will be a burden to her.

Most of the volunteers are enthusiastic in participating in the service projects. They could also handle the service users without difficulties. ... For those less committed volunteers, I have to pay great effort in pushing them to take the volunteer role. Some of them did not understand and/or recognize the role of volunteers. Some of them have their biased fear on people with mental handicap. (KNN, SII, 13.6)

KNN's view is echoed by AY, the Student Development Officer for diploma programmes and above (HKQF Level 3 and above). AY finds that for those committed student participants, even though they lack experience and skills, they can perform well in the Service-Learning process as they can learn and improve their performance throughout the Service-Learning process.

Service for the elderly was arranged on the assumption that the Project Yi Jin students lack service experience, the service for elderly seems to be more manageable for the Project Yi Jin students. After the service, the students are highly appreciated. For our Social Service Group members, they are encouraged by their effort in successfully training a group of committed volunteers. (AY, SII, 14.7)

Responsibility

Referring to KNN's experience, students' performance in Service-Learning process is directly related to level of responsibility.

In my observation, they were more responsible. They would help to prepare the materials for the service. They also took the initiative to talk and play with the service users. I have no need to give much advice in the service process. (KKN, SII, 13.6)

As a result, the students who have higher level of responsibility will be more competent in learning and providing service to the needy. For those students who lack responsibility, poor performance will be predicted.

Some of the volunteers would break their promise and they gave up in attending the service. For example, in service project for elderly, volunteers have to home visit the appointed service user. After the home visit, the volunteers should submit their questionnaire and log sheet to the service organization. Some of the volunteers failed to submit the questionnaire and log sheet on time, so I have to follow up the issue in the next day and apologize. To conclude, the volunteers' sense of responsibility is inadequate. (KKN, SII, 13.6)

Responsiveness

In the Service-Learning process, the student participants are facing service users they have never met before. Students' readiness and capacities in responding to the service users' needs are crucial factors for the success of Service-Learning process.

In case of serving the people with mental handicap, one part of the programme is to teach and instruct the service users to do handcraft. It is obvious that those who are anxious in contact with the service users, would just 'talk' to the service users, rather than helping the service users to handle the handcraft work. I initiated to demonstrate the skills in teaching work to the under-performed students, they have finally showed improvement in the service process. (KNN, SII, 13.6)

KNN's strategy is to train up the students before and during the implementation of service projects. In this sense, student participants can improve their performance in becoming responsive to service users' needs.

Reluctance to collaborate among students

Based on the difference in academic culture and some other personal factors, it was found that students from different academic programmes found it problematic to cooperate with each other to implement Service-Learning projects.

I observed that the core members (of Social Service Group), who come from social work programme, seem to be reluctant to work with those non-social work students. ... I have also invited some non-social work students to join the core group.

However, the social work students would claim that they could not arrange meeting with non-social work students, and so the non-social work students could not take up a leading role. (AY, SII, 14.7)

Such reluctance might be resolved through the lead of service coordinator under a more structured and formal division of labor. Moreover, formal collaboration among different academic programmes might also be a solution to the issue.

6.5.2 Organizational Support on Service-Learning

Staff members find that the support from the organization in relation to Service-Learning is inadequate. They suggest the College has to invest more resources in the following areas.

Maintaining motivation of student participants

One of the incentives to improve students' motivation in participation of Service-Learning projects is to provide award and/or recognition to those well-performed student participants in Service-Learning projects.

I propose that some award, or the like, would encourage and motivate students to participate in the Service-Learning projects. (AY, SII, 14.7)

If Service-Learning is on a voluntary basis, student participants will treasure such tangible recognition as certification. In some academic programmes such as Project Yi Jin (HKQF Level 2), students recognized that 'certificate of service' will be an asset for their further studies and/or finding a job.

I guess that the volunteers are involved in service projects according to their needs to gain service certificate. If they know that they are awarded a certificate for participating in a particular service project, they are willing to involve. ... In my first meeting with the volunteers, I have asked students what are their objectives in joining the volunteer group. Some of them frankly replied that they want to gain certificate. It seems that the service certificate would help them in applying for a

post in Disciplined Services. They are highly motivated by the service certificate in this sense. (KNN, SII, 13.6)

According to the staff members, students are motivated also by the nature of the service project. If the students perceive that their work is meaningful to them and to the service users, they are more motivated to be involved in the service projects.

Students involved in the (service) project would observe that the positive outcome of their effort (for example, repainting a table) when they come to the site again. Students in such projects could contribute their effort based on their strengths and abilities. (AY, SII, 14.7)

In the above case, students can observe the impact of their work. No matter whether the impact is great or not, they will believe that they can effect change in the process. Thus, they will participate in other service projects to gain a sense of achievement.

On the other hand, implementation of Service-Learning can be designed as a stage model whereby students at different academic (HKQF) level can play different roles. In this sense, students are more motivated in the Service-Learning process.

A stage model of implementation of Service-Learning would facilitate students to have a sense of development and create a culture of leading the juniors by seniors. A positive learning culture would be developed. (SNH, SII, 24.10)

From the above, the College should provide support such as recognition, certificate and well planned delivery model to maintain and enhance students' motivation in Service-Learning process.

Human Resources

Like other new initiatives in education field in Hong Kong, the development of Service-Learning is limited by lack of human resources.

For the development of Service-Learning in our college human resources should be

invested in to manage and follow up the Service-Learning projects. ... If there is a coordinator or supervisor, who could provide concrete instructions and directions for SDC in development of Service-Learning, the results would be much improved. (AY, SII, 14.7)

The implementation of Service-Learning requires staff members (both from Student Development Centre and academic staff) in designing and coordinating the Service-Learning projects. Moreover, as mentioned by AY, there is no concrete direction (strategic plan) in implementation of Service-Learning within the College.

Owing to limited human resources, staff members can only implement Service-Learning projects within their own capacity.

Although I want to pay more effort in developing the structure and operation of Service-Learning projects, my position is not a 'full-time' post in running Service-Learning projects. I have to handle many other duties in my work. The limited time taken for Service-Learning project is an issue. (AY, SII, 14.7)

Academic staff involvement

It is interesting that at present, academic staff involvement in Service-Learning projects is not a 'must' in the College. The reason may be that there is no clear policy and strategic plan for the development of Service-Learning. As a result, academic staff may not sense the importance of their contribution to these projects.

It is suggested that academic staff at different levels be involved in Service-Learning. Teachers' involvement would motivate and facilitate students' involvement and commitment to service. ... The involvement of academic staff to lead and plan Service-Learning programme is a new direction for development. If the Student Development Unit is responsible for motivating and organizing academic staff to participate in Service-Learning, the effectiveness is questionable. (KNN, SII, 13.6)

In fact, KNN experienced the positive outcomes of involving academic staff in the Service-Learning process.

There is a large service (learning) project in this year. The leader is Joseph, an academic leader in the Project Yi Jin programme. In the project, all teachers teaching Project Yi Jin programme involved in leading their students to participate. Even the Principal was involved. In this sense, the overall impact of the service project is obvious. (KNN, SII, 13.6)

As an educational process, academic staff can provide professional and knowledge support to the students and to the service projects.

I suggest that a staff member with academic knowledge on Service-Learning would lead the Service-Learning project in a better way. Even as a consultant, the staff member would facilitate the learning opportunities and outcomes of Service-Learning for our students. (AY, SII, 14.7)

AY identifies that the involvement of academic staff can be in different forms. Academic staff can be a mobilizer of students' participation, a coordinator of service projects,

In the simplest form, if a SDC staff member takes up the coordinator role, he or she could contact delegated academic staff from different academic programmes to explore the needs of their students and the direction of implementing Service-Learning projects. By doing so, these delegated academic staff would mobilize and encourage their students to participate in Service-Learning projects. (AY, SII, 14.7)

On the other hand, SNH suggests that the operation of Service-Learning can be done by three departments of the College.

In this connection, staff members from at least three departments could collaborate: non-social work teachers, social work teachers and student affairs office (SDC). The non-social work teachers could be responsible for advisor for the task goals. Social work teachers for process goals and SDC for coordination of Service-Learning projects and taking care of students, in case of long trip and visits are required. (SNH, SII, 24.10)

In addition, the degree of involvement of academic staff varies depending on the characteristics of students.

The participation of academic staff could vary according to the maturity, competence and expectations of the students. For beginners in Service-Learning, academic staff's leading and directing role is important and appropriate. For final year students, academic staff's role and involvement could be reduced. (SNH, SII, 24.10)

To conclude, Service-Learning can be effectively organized and delivered through the collaboration of the supporting staff (staff members of Student Development Centre) and academic staff. At present, the academic staff involvement is found to be insufficient and the organization should re-consider the operation of Service-Learning in which academic staff involvement can be enhanced.

Support from senior management

The staff members interviewed agree that the importance of senior management's role in the Service-Learning initiative. For example, AY identifies the role of senior management in resource allocation.

I have to say that in promotion of Service-Learning, the recognition from senior management and staff is a crucial factor for success. If the senior management identify with the promotion of Service-Learning as a mean to enhance our students' learning, more resources would be invested. (AY, SII, 14.7)

SNH especially experiences the lack of support (or recognition) from the senior management on his work in promotion of Service-Learning within the College.

Since there is no formal platform (as recognized by the senior management) on the Service-Learning issue, my proposal (on Service-Learning) becomes part of casual talks only. (SNH, SII, 24.10)

Conclusion

In this section, I have displayed staff informants' views on organizational support to Service-Learning projects. Among the issues discussed, I find that the most important factor for success of Service-Learning in the organizational context is the support from senior management. The decision from the top, that is, the top-down approach to implementation of Service-Learning is suggested by the staff informants.

6.5.3 Improvement Measures

As the experts in implementation of Service-Learning project, the staff members interviewed reflect that there should have improvement in the following areas.

Systematic evaluation of Service-Learning

In order to ensure the effectiveness of implementing Service-Learning projects in students' learning, the staff members recommended that there should be a more systematic evaluation on the operation and outcomes of Service-Learning.

The collaboration in Service-Learning project among staff of SDC for students from different academic programmes would improve both the efficiency and effectiveness. In addition, it provides the space to evaluate the effectiveness of Service-Learning programme. Through the pre-test and post-test (questionnaire, focus group, etc.), we could have better understanding of the students' needs, preferences and expectation. As a result, the Service-Learning projects will benefit the students more. (KKN, SII, 13.6)

KNN's focus is more on the student side, she prefers to have better understanding of students' needs and expectations. Whereas, AY and SNH suggest that evaluation of the impact on Service-Learning on students will attract more resources for Service-Learning implementation.

In the College, our effort in Service-Learning would be seen as non-systematic, non-scientific and non-academic. ... At present, I am examining the means to evaluate the

outcomes of Service-Learning so as to improve practice. (AY, SII, 14.7)

In my observation, the evaluation of Service-Learning in Hong Kong and in many overseas countries, are in fact a 'weak evaluation'. Detailed re-examination of the pros and cons of Service-Learning in relation to contextual analysis of the students' situation, that is, 'strong evaluation' would help us to have a clear and thorough picture on Service-Learning. (SNH, SII, 24.10)

Adjustment of formal curriculum

Consistent with students' views, staff members also suggest that the current formal curriculum for students is not flexible enough to allow students to have 'space' in benefiting from Service-Learning projects.

After training workshop on working with youth, the volunteers (students) have to prepare themselves in attending final examination. As a result, they failed to organize any service project for youth. (KNN, SII, 13.6)

In promoting Service-Learning projects, I have found that the students' formal curriculum is quite heavy and they don't have much time in preparing the service projects. ... students are quite busy, the workload has shifted to the two or three core members in the service process. (AY, SII, 14.7)

In responding to the 'heavy' workload in academic work, it was suggested that a adjustment in formal curriculum and/or incorporation of Service-Learning into formal curriculum would help.

... the College should provide some measure to initiate and motivate the commitment of the volunteers. This can be done in both 'hard' and 'soft' way. The 'hard' way is adjustment within the academic system. We could require the students to commit certain number of time as study hours (whether credit bearing or not) in different kinds of Service-Learning. At present, the students could commit or not commit themselves on voluntary basis. The requirement of Service-Learning hours would promote and develop a sense of serving others. (KNN, SII, 13.6)

The above measure is in fact 'curriculum-based Service-Learning', where Service-Learning is incorporated into formal curriculum. Students are required to commit themselves in the process and learning can be evaluated through academic work assessment.

Establishment of college-wide steering committee

Owing to the complexity of involving various department and academic programmes in implementation of Service-Learning projects, the establishment of a Steering Committee is suggested. The membership of the Steering Committee includes representative from the departments and academic programmes concerned.

In fact, there is no clear direction (policy) in promoting Service-Learning in the College. Some Service-Learning projects are organized but there is no major theme and supporting process executed. ... On the other hand, I do not prefer to develop a centralized unit to manage Service-Learning. So the inputs from academic programmes and central administration are deemed to be necessary. (SNH, SII, 24.10)

Provision of variety of service opportunities

To enhance students' learning, KNN suggests that there should have a variety of service opportunities provided for students. In this situation, the students can have wider exposure in the Service-Learning process.

The service should be more in-depth in nature. It is better to have a variety of opportunities for the volunteers (students) to experience and reflect on the service experience. ... I prefer to have two to three service opportunities for each service user group and more than one service user group. The reason is to allow the volunteers to expose to different groups of service users, in order to have consolidated experience for learning. (KKN, SII, 13.6)

As the students of the College lack life experience and self confidence in general,

the service experience gained through Service-Learning will be a foundation for their learning.

Inter-disciplinary collaboration among students

In the Service-Learning process, SNH recommends that inter-disciplinary collaboration among students in the College will benefit students more. Being an academic staff member of the ADSW programme, SNH knows that the training of social work students will facilitate learning in the Service-Learning process.

(I suggest) social work students and non-social work students collaborate to conduct Service-Learning projects. The division of labor could be that for task goals (planning and implementation), non-social work students could contribute more. For example, students from computer studies could contribute computer literacy knowledge to elderly people ... The application of the students' expertise in computer literacy coincides with the idea of Service-Learning (applying learning into service, doing service for further learning). On the other hand, social work students could pay more effort on the process goals, including care and concerns for the service users and service providers. Although most of the social work students are familiar with computer literacy, they can contribute themselves based on their social work training. (SNH, SII, 24.10)

In SNH's perspective, the division of labor is based on the training background of the students. The design of Service-Learning can facilitate students in different discipline to contribute their best to service projects. In addition, students can also learn from peers with different training background.

Reflection on rationale and operation of Service-Learning

In the examination of the conception of Service-Learning, SNH further suggests that a reflection on the rationale behind Service-Learning is essential. Throughout these few years, many post-secondary education institutes began to explore the possibilities of Service-Learning as a new way of learning, or a supplement to formal curriculum. It is time to reflect on the rationale and operation of Service-

Learning in a 'deeper' way.

In Hong Kong, Service-Learning may be another opportunity for collaboration among social service sector and education sector. Social service organizations could act more aggressively to influence the mentality in education sector for what to learn, how to learn and for whom to learn. ... It is more than discussion on technical way of implementing Service-Learning, a deeper reflection and stronger evaluation of Service-Learning is needed. The focus and scope of such evaluation is the rationale behind Service-Learning. Is it the way of learning? Is it possible to be developed as a way of life? (SHN, SII, 24.10)

Through reflection from the staff involved in the implementation of Service-Learning, the direction of Service-Learning development can be reviewed and refined.

Platform for students' reflection

In the literature review (Section 3.3), I suggested that students' reflection on their Service-Learning process is deemed essential to their integration of service experience into new learning. Students' reflection can be facilitated by various means: evaluation meetings/ debriefing sessions, reflective journals, written assignments, etc.

In the interviews of staff members, I find that there is no platform for students' reflection of their Service-Learning process.

Oral exchange of feelings, expectations and learning is executed. There is no written format in evaluating the learning of the volunteers. It is more beneficial to have the written format to evaluate the learning of the volunteers. At the very least, it provides a platform and opportunity for the volunteers to reflect on their own effort. (KNN, SII, 13.6)

Moreover, KNN reflects that her effort in facilitating students' reflection on the Service-Learning process is insufficient.

Under the time constraint, I could not conduct individual debriefing with every volunteer. I just talked to those volunteers with more 'serious problems', such as being extremely passive in the service process. The individual debriefing would help the volunteer to reexamine the learning outcome through the service process. ... If time allowed, I believe that lower performing volunteers would experience positive change. (KNN, SII, 13.6)

In AY's practice, he tries to provide opportunities for students to 'digest' and 'consolidate' their learning throughout the Service-Learning process. The outcomes of the service projects are comparatively more positive.

They (Students) have to digest and pick up the relevant points, develop an appropriate session plan and allocate members in each session of training. They have meaningful reflection on their own practice and learn much in the process. ... Then you (staff member) provide the space for the students to plan and develop their own self-learning projects. (AY, SII, 14.7)

6.6 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I have displayed and analyzed the data gathered from staff members involved in Service-Learning projects. They all agree that Service-Learning, as an educational initiative, can benefit students in different aspects (**Figure 6.1**).

In addition, each staff member suggests that they have to take up multiple roles in the process. Major roles such as advisor, coordinator, leader, trainer, project manager and facilitator are identified.

There is room for improvement in the current operation of the Service-Learning projects in the College. In particular, the College has to invest resources to prepare students to be involved in the Service-Learning process. On the other hand, the staff members, the senior management and academic structure (formal curriculum) of the College should also be prepared in implementation of Service-Learning initiative.

Chapter 7 Discussion: Towards a Conceptual Model for Service-Learning Development

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, I displayed and analyzed the data gathered from informants (student participants and staff members) of the College. Based on the data analysis, in this chapter, I will propose a conceptual/ theoretical framework (model) for Service-Learning development in the College.

7.2 Outcomes of Service-Learning

The long-term outcomes of Service-Learning cannot be determined from my study as it was not designed to evaluate the impact of Service-Learning. Thus, the outcomes of Service-Learning in this context, are based on the perceived benefits of Service-Learning for student participants, from the students' and staff members' viewpoints.

According to my research findings, a summary of the benefits is illustrated below:

Table 7.1 : Benefits of Service-Learning for Students

Citizenship Behaviors	Interpersonal Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helping people• Reflection on social phenomenon• Understanding different cultures• Reflection on own role in society	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpersonal skills• Leadership and teamwork
Personal Development	Intellectual Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-confidence• Learn to be flexible• Reflection on self• Sense of satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Application of learning• Learning from service users• Reflection on social work knowledge• Learning technical skills

The above findings are consistent with in the research that I reviewed from the USA. First of all, Service-Learning projects do not only help people in need through community services, but they also develop student participants' own responsibility in understanding and managing social problems and issues related to the service user groups (Astin et al., 2000; Boyle-Baise & Kilbane, 2000; Bringle & Kremer, 1993; Driscoll, Holland, Gelmon, & Kerrigan, 1996; Dunlap, 1997; Eyler, Giles & Braxton, 1997; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Potthoff, et al., 2000; Vogelgesang & Astin, 2000).

Secondly, student participants' interpersonal skills can be developed throughout the service planning, service implementation and service evaluation process. In addition to pre-service training on communication skills in relation to different service user groups, the service setting also provides a natural environment for student participants to pursue and develop their social skills. Experiential learning theory applies in the service process. These findings are consistent with those from various studies (Astin & Sax, 1998; Dalton & Petrie, 1997; Driscoll, et al., 1996; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Freidus, 1997; Giles & Eyler, 1994; Gray, et al., 1998; Keen, & Keen, 1998; Mabry, 1998; McMahon, 1998; Wade & Yarborough, 1996).

In reviewing literature and research on outcomes of Service-Learning, (Astin, Sax, & Avalos, 1999; Astin et al., 2000; Eyler, Giles, & Braxton, 1997; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Fenzel & Leary, 1997; Freidus, 1997; Gray, et al., 1998; Peterson, 1998; Rhoads, 1997; Rockquemore & Schaffer 2000; Sledge, Shelburne, & Jones, 1993; Wang, 2000; McCarthy, 2009; SLC, 2009), my findings support that Service-Learning experience can enhance students' self development. In fact, Service-Learning experience can be seen as an asset for students. Through self reflection (with and without the application of a reflective journal), sharing sessions and interaction among student participants, they can have a thorough understanding of themselves.

Finally, throughout the Service-Learning process, students are expected to apply classroom learning into practice. My findings support the argument that Service-Learning can facilitate students' integration of learning (Balazadeh, 1996; Cohen &

Kinsey, 1994; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Fenzel & Leary, 1997; McClam & Harrower, 2003; White, Festa & Allocca, 1999).

The above findings are consistent with research on Service-Learning in the local Hong Kong context (Chan et al., 2003; Ngai, 2006; Chan, 2011).

7.3 Role of Service-Learning in Post-Secondary Education in Hong Kong

With reference to the Education Reform Proposal as prepared by the Education Commission of Hong Kong (2000), the qualities of students (especially those post-secondary and undergraduate) are expected to be:

Adaptability, creativity and abilities for communication, self-learning and cooperation are now the prerequisites for anyone to succeed, while a person's character, emotional qualities, horizons and learning are important factors in achieving excellence. 'Lifelong Learning and All round Development' is our expectation of everyone in this era. Education is infinitely important for everyone (Education Commission, 2000, p.3).

In taking up the role of educating students at HKQF Level 2 and above, the College finds that the students are characterized by: poor academic self-concept and low attainment value in learning (Lau & Chan, 2001). The Service-Learning initiative is thus implemented as a measure to improve the students' competences in different areas (**Section 2.4, p.17**).

In particular, Service-Learning is expected to achieve the following objectives: (Waterman, 1997)

1. to facilitate students' learning in classrooms
2. to facilitate personal development
3. to develop a sense of social consciousness and responsibilities
4. to contribute to the community

In the following section, I will relate these objectives with the findings and discuss the implication of Service-Learning for students' learning and personal development in Hong Kong.

7.3.1 Promoting Students' All-round (Holistic) Development

Apart from acquisition of academic knowledge and skills through the teaching and learning process, it is expected that post-secondary education will facilitate students in 'all-round development'. With reference to the Education Commission's Education Reform Proposal (2000), one of the major functions of higher (post-secondary) education is:

To train up quality people to contribute to the economic growth of Hong Kong. ... The mission of higher (post-secondary) education should not be confined to imparting knowledge and skills. Instead, it should provide students with training in the aspects of culture, emotion, moral conscience and mentality, with a view to nurturing capable for the development of the society (Education Commission, 2000, para 8.4.2, p.110).

On the other hand, with the keen competition in the university admission process, students have no time and space to explore and take care of themselves. All-round development, in the broadest sense, is to allow and facilitate an individual student to explore and re-examine her/himself as a learner, as a citizen and as a person taking multiple roles in the society.

Daniel Shek (2010), utilizing the framework of social-emotional learning in education, argued that in addition to focusing on the academic achievement of students, we should also pay attention to the social and emotional development of young people. According to the 'Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning'²⁰ (CASEL), social and emotional learning (SEL) is "the process of

²⁰ CASEL was founded in 1994 by Daniel Goleman, the author of *Emotional Intelligence*, educator/philanthropist Eileen Rockefeller Growald, and a group of distinguished researchers and practitioners. It is a not-for-profit organization that works to advance the science and evidence-based

acquiring the skills to recognize and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish positive relationships, and handle challenging situations effectively.” Generally speaking, several domains in SEL are identified, including self-awareness (e.g., identifying emotions and recognizing strengths), social awareness (e.g., perspective taking and appreciating diversity), self-management (e.g., managing emotions and goal setting), responsible decision making (e.g., analyzing situations, assuming personal responsibility, respecting others, problem solving), and relationship skills (e.g., communication, building relationships, negotiation, refusal). The above components of SEL are usually included in the conception of holistic development in young people.

With reference to **Table 7.1** (p.156), I find that the benefits (outcomes) of Service-Learning are consistent with the ‘all-round development’ or holistic development of students. In particular, through the service experience, student participants can reflect on their values, strengths and limitations and develop self-confidence.

In my previous experience as a teacher of the ADSW programme in the College, I observed that some students of the College are lacking in self-confidence. Throughout the ‘give-and-take’ process (that is, giving help to the service users and learning and gaining life experience in the service process), student participants can experience and develop themselves in the following domains: (1) self-awareness (reflection on self), social awareness (reflection on social phenomena, understanding different cultures, reflection on own role in society), and relationship skills (interpersonal skills, leadership and teamwork). In addition, student participants can also benefit from Service-Learning on their improvement academic competence (application of learning, reflection on social work knowledge, learning technical skills).

In his paper on holistic development of university students, Shek (2010) proposed that curricula-based courses on holistic youth development should be provided, in addition to extra-curricular activities provided by Student Affairs Offices (SAO) of the universities in Hong Kong. I personally agree that holistic youth development

can be promoted through various means. According to the findings of the present study, I will propose that Service-Learning will be a means to promote students' all-round (holistic) development. The students who present themselves in the real life service context will be able to pursue and develop skills and competences more effectively and meaningfully.

7.3.2 Enhancing the Employability of Graduates

From a human resource angle, there are new requirements for 'human resources' in a knowledge-based society. To resolve problems that people may encounter both in life and work, multiple-faceted analytical skills and knowledge in multiple disciplines will be required. In this context, "higher (post-secondary) education should provide students with learning experiences in multiple disciplines, help them develop broad-sense knowledge and vision, as well as enhance their problem-solving power and adaptability" (Education Commission, 2000, para.8.4.3, p.111).

As there are measures to train more young people to achieve a higher level of education (Hong Kong Government, 2000, para.66), the graduates of post-secondary education are facing keen competition in the labor market.

As the College is a private, self-financing education institute, the graduates perceive that the competitiveness of their qualifications (diploma, higher diploma, associate degree and above) is 'comparatively less favorable'. Thus, one of the focuses of the College in the development of post-secondary education programmes is to enhance students' employability.

Employability is a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy (Yorke, 2006).

In reviewing literature and research studies on employability, I have found that employers are expecting graduates to acquire a number of skills and capabilities in meeting the challenges arising from their work. In Archer & Davidson's (2008)

study, UK employers were asked to indicate the skills and capabilities they considered important when recruiting new graduates. Table 7.2 below shows the top 10 skills and capabilities they consider important:

Table 7.2²¹ : Top 10 Most Important Skills and Capabilities When Recruiting New Graduates

	Grand Total
Communication skills	86%
Team-building skills	85%
Integrity	83%
Intellectual ability	81%
Confidence	80%
Character/ Personality	75%
Planning and organizing skills	74%
Literacy (good writing skills)	71%
Numeracy (good with numbers)	68%
Analysis and decision-making skills	67%

The latest research from the Grant Thornton International Business Report (IBR) revealed employers' expectation of younger workers (Grant Thornton, 2012). More than half of Hong Kong businesses (54%) cited low levels of loyalty as a reason that prevents them from employing young people. Besides, poor attitude (cited by 62% of businesses), low self-discipline and motivation (both 60%) and poor communication (42%) merge as the key reasons employers choose not to hire younger workers.

From the above studies, I find that the employers of UK and Hong Kong expect that apart from academic qualifications, graduates of post-secondary education should have competence in the interpersonal domain as well as personal qualities, such as: communication, leadership, team-work, self confidence, self-discipline and work attitude.

²¹ Adapted and modified from Archer & Davidson (2008), p.7.

In examining the benefits of Service-Learning, we can find that Service-Learning can enhance graduates' employability for their first employment. Moreover, the Service-Learning process is, in fact, providing a social situation for student participants to interact with strangers (service users) and real life environment. Such contact will also enhance students' adaptability to their working environment.

7.4 Current Service Delivery Model of Service-Learning

According to informants' responses, Service-Learning projects in the College are delivered in a number of ways (Table 7.3):

Table 7.3 : Current Service-Learning Delivery Model

Programme Mode (HKQF Level)	Service Delivery Model (Nature)	Responsible Staff (Department/ Unit)
Project Yi Jin (HKQF Level 2)	Social Service Group (Extra-curricular activities)	Student Development Officer (SDC Staff)
Associate Diploma, Foundation Year of Higher Diploma (HKQF Level 2)	Chall-tice (Credit-bearing subject)	Student Development Officer (SDC Staff)
Diploma (HKQF Level 3), Higher Diploma (HKQF Level 4)	Social Service Group (Extra-curricular activities)	Student Development Officer (SDC Staff)
Associate Degree (HKQF Level 4)	Subject-related/ 100 hours placement preparation or related activities (Compulsory)	Lecturer of ADSW programme (ADSW programme)
Top-Up Degree & above (HKQF Level 5 & above)	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

From the above, we can observe that the implementation of Service-Learning projects is in the preliminary stage. The effort for designing, developing and implementing Service-Learning as an educational initiative is not well-organized and integrated with academic learning in the College. Such non-systematic and 'piece-meal' efforts will not create long-lasting impact on the students.

Referring to Berry & Chisholm's five models of Service-Learning in higher education (1999), we can find that the College adopts two of the models of Service-Learning. One of them is the 'Course or Module Related Model' (Berry & Chisholm, 1999, p.48). In this model, service and learning is linked through tying the service to one of the courses or modules. In the College, the subject 'Chall-tice' and some modules of ADSW programme.

On the other hand, the 'Non-credited but Part of the Learning Expectation Model' (Berry & Chisholm, 1999, p.53) is also identified in the ADSW programme. Students are expected to attend 100 hours of Service-Learning projects or training programmes related to social work profession.

Referring to Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, both the student informants and staff informants agree that the Service-Learning projects are meaningful to students' learning and personal development. However, there is room for improvement in terms of the organization and resource allocation. The following table summarizes the viewpoints from the informants (**Table 7.4**):

**Table 7.4 : Summary of Informants' Views on Improvement Measures for
Service-Learning Implementation**

Areas for Improvement	Students' Views	Staff's Views
Staff Involvement	Staff involvement of hosting social service organization	Academic staff involvement
	Follow up action	Human resources
	Accessibility of staff	
Resources support	Physical environment and facilities	Support from senior management
	Financial support	
	Proper policies and procedures	
Platform for student development and reflection	Training	Platform for students' reflection
	Development of student support network	
Curriculum design	Improvement in curriculum design	Adjustment of formal curriculum
Student participation	Freedom of choice	Maintaining motivation of student participants
		Inter-disciplinary collaboration among students
		Provision of variety of service opportunities
Monitoring of Service-Learning projects	Coordination among different parties	Establishment of college-wide steering committee
		Reflection on rationale and operation of Service-Learning
		Systematic evaluation of Service-Learning

From the above, the Service-Learning projects implemented in the College have not been seen as an integral part of the education programmes delivered by the College. With the understanding that Service-Learning will benefit students' learning and personal development, and their employability as discussed in **Section 7.3**, I suggest that Service-Learning should be implemented as a college-wide education initiative

for the benefits of the students.

In the following section, I will propose the strategies for development of Service-Learning in the College, with reference to my findings.

7.5 Strategies for Development of Service-Learning in the College

In this section, I will apply a change management perspective to examine the College's incorporation of Service-Learning into the college-wide practice in education delivery. The current change process is reviewed and strategies are suggested for further development of Service-Learning in the College.

In reviewing the literature on organizational change management and Service-Learning, we find that there will be barriers and resistance from staff members and students (customers of the academic programmes) to some extent. Thus, these factors should be considered in developing strategies for Service-Learning.

7.5.1 Current Phase of Change Process

The incorporation of Service-Learning initiative in the College will lead to change in organizational structure and working culture. Such incorporation will also lead to change in curriculum design, nature of teacher-student relationships, teaching strategies and work pattern in general.

Most researchers identify three broad phases to the educational change process. Phase I, the 'Initiation Phase', consists of the process that leads up to and includes a decision to adopt or proceed with a change. Phase II, the 'Implementation Phase', involves the first experiences of attempting to put an idea or reform into phase. Phase III, the 'Institutionalization Phase', refers to whether the change gets built in as an ongoing part of the system or disappears by way of a decision to discard or through attrition (see Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Huberman & Miles, 1984).

In reviewing my findings, I define the current phase of change process in the College as Phase I, the 'Initiation Phase'. Throughout the data collection and data

analysis process, I have learned that the College has tried to incorporate Service-Learning in part of its educational programmes. Attempts are made by different parties in the organization. However, the implementation of change is in quite a 'piecemeal' style. Moreover, the College has not developed a concrete plan and schedule in implementation of Service-Learning initiatives. Having examined the benefits of Service-Learning for students, I suggest that a college-wide practice of Service-Learning initiative can be implemented.

In reviewing Slavin's 'Success for All' Model, Herman (1999) identified the central components of implementation of the model. These components include: (1) organizational change, staffing and administrative support; (2) a focus on curriculum and instruction; (3) supplies and materials; (4) scheduling and grouping; (5) monitoring of student progress and performance and (6) family and community support. This model provides insights for me to suggest the strategies in development of Service-Learning in the College.

7.5.2 Strategies at College Level

At the College Level, the following measures are suggested to promote the effectiveness and efficiency of Service-Learning implementation:

Establishment of College-wide Steering Committee

Both AY and SNH suggest that there should be a centralized body to review and monitor the implementation of Service-Learning projects. I observe that it is not feasible for a self-financing education institute like the College to invest resources to set up an individual department or unit to manage Service-Learning. Rather, establishment of a Steering Committee might be a solution. The 'Steering Committee on Service-Learning' is a group of individuals responsible for general operating policy, procedures, and related matters affecting the Service-Learning implementation in the College.

As suggested by the staff informants, the steering committee should be chaired by a representative from senior management, for example, the vice principal.

Stakeholders and or experts on Service-Learning can be grouped together whereby the policies and resources on Service-Learning can be discussed and determined. With reference to informants' ideas, the major concerns of the steering committee can be shaped as:

1. Defining Service-Learning in the College's organizational context
2. Development and review of policies and procedures for Service-Learning implementation
3. Determination of resources requirement for implementation of Service-Learning projects
4. Development of handbooks or manuals for the concerned parties, that is: (1) Handbook/ Manual for Staff Members; (2) Handbook/ Manual for Community Partners (NGOs); and (3) Handbook/ Manual for Students.

Through the platform of the Steering Committee, the concerned parties can express their viewpoints and comments on the pace of Service-Learning development in the College. Of course, the establishment of the Steering Committee is also a sign of support from the senior management in promotion of college-wide Service-Learning.

Student Development Centre as the Contact Point for Service-Learning

With reference to AY's and KKN's words, the Student Development Centre (SDC) of the College is responsible for linking up the College with community partners (NGOs nearby the College) in implementing Service-Learning projects. Upon reviewing the roles and functions of the Service Coordinators/ Mentors of Service-Learning, the responsible Student Development Officer (like AY and KNN) identify their role as a coordinator or mediator to link up with the NGOs. As a student support unit, like the Student Affairs Office of other local universities, the SDC can serve the following functions:

1. Developing and exploring working relationships with community partners
2. Coordination among academic units and community partners
3. Coordination and leadership in Student-initiated Service-Learning projects

In the relationship building process with community partners, the SDC staff will explore various service opportunities available for student participants to meet their individual learning needs. However, the linkage of the student participants with the potential service users can never be effective without the support from teaching/academic staff members.

Incorporation of Service-Learning into Strategic Plan for College Development

With the help of the **Steering Committee**, the senior management of the College has to prioritize the Service-Learning projects in the College's strategic plan. As an educational initiative and a measure to enhance students' learning and personal development, Service-Learning will improve the reputation of the College in the long run.

In this regard, the development of Service-Learning into a college-wide practice will enrich students' learning opportunities and benefits from the service projects. In addition, the college wide practice of Service-Learning will facilitate and allow students to exchange and learn from peers in various service opportunities.

7.5.3 Strategies at Programme Level

As it is recommended that Service-Learning will be implemented as a college-wide practice, there should be changes in the structure of the academic programmes in the College.

Curriculum Re-design

At the programme level, the academic staff of individual programmes should review and re-design the curriculum to incorporate Service-Learning.

The changes in programme curriculum can be considered by a combination of different approaches: (1) Subject/ Module where Service-Learning is Optional; (2) Individual Service-Learning Subject; (3) Service-Learning as a criterion for graduation.

Subject/ Module where Service-Learning is Optional: In this approach, Service-Learning components are part of the subject. However, students and/ or teachers can choose whether the Service-Learning components are experienced and assessed throughout the teaching and learning process of the subject. The example in the College is the subject 'Chall-tice' (**Appendix F**) where students are required either to participate in Service-Learning projects or other training opportunities as a subject requirement.

Individual Service-Learning Subjects: In this approach, Service-Learning components are incorporated as core components of the subject(s). Thus, all students have the opportunity for practical experience outside the classroom and a chance to serve the community.

The above two approaches are consistent with Berry & Chisholm's 'Course or Module Related Model' (1999). In this model, the academic staff members have to add Service-Learning components into subject syllabi or design new subjects to incorporate Service-Learning.

Service-Learning as one of the Criteria for Graduation: In this approach, Service-Learning components are not incorporated into individual subjects. Rather, students have to complete a certain number of service projects and submit reflective documents/ journals to the College, so that they can fulfill the graduation requirements as set out by the College. Usually such Service-Learning projects are not credit-bearing but essential for the students to integrate classroom learning into practice. One example is the '100 hours placement preparation or related activities' requirement developed by the ADSW programme (**Appendix E**).

Based on my findings, the three elements of 'Student Ownership', freedom of choice, pre-service training and sense of autonomy (**Section 5.4**), should also be considered in re-designing the formal curriculum.

Inter-disciplinary Collaboration

Apart from curriculum review within the discipline or individual academic programmes, another approach for Service-Learning development within the College is the 'Cohesive Curriculum Model'. In this model, Berry & Chisholm (1999) find that two or more disciplines or professional tracks are brought together around a service opportunity. Requiring a team of teachers from different fields, these Service-Learning programmes demonstrate collaborative teaching and learning and the need for a coordinated approach to problems. In another variation of the cohesive curriculum, the service may be a group project with students in the group approaching the learning and service from several different disciplines or career training tracks. Students share their varying approaches through the work they are doing together.

As suggested by SNH, social work students can collaborate with business or information technology students in organizing service projects for the needy. Social work students can contribute their competence in assessing the service needs and developing working relationships with service users (process goal), whereas, students from other disciplines can contribute their technical skills and professional knowledge in service programme implementation (task goal).

7.5.4 Redefining the Role of Service Coordinator/ Mentor

In reviewing my research findings, both the students and staff members interviewed agree that the roles played by the service coordinator/ mentor will impact on the Service-Learning outcomes. The identified roles of the service coordinator/ mentor are as follows: (Table 7.5)

Table 7.5 : Summary of the Roles of Service Coordinator/ Mentor

Roles Identified by Students	Roles Identified by Staff Members
Advisor	Advisor
Coordinator	Coordinator
Leader	Leader
Trainer	Trainer
Information Provider	Project Manager and Facilitator

Obviously, most of the roles identified by both staff and student informants are similar. However, based on my findings, there are additional roles found to be essential for the development of a Service-Learning initiative. Moreover, academic staff and staff from SDC should have an appropriate division of labor among themselves.

Academic Staff

Apart from the roles listed in **Table 7.5**, academic staff members should also take up the 'change agent' role in the Service-Learning process. A change agent is an individual who "facilitates changes in the particular area in which it is needed" (McClaman & Paton, 1992, p.144). In the College's context, the change agent has the following tasks:

Identification of Students' Learning Needs and Learning Objectives: It is a Service-Learning maxim that one cannot develop a quality Service-Learning subject or experience without first setting very explicit learning objectives. This principle is foundational to Service-Learning. While establishing learning objectives for students is a standard to which a subject is accountable, in fact, it is especially necessary and advantageous to establish learning objectives in Service-Learning subjects and experiences.

Review and Redesign of Formal Curriculum: As mentioned in **Section 7.5.2**, academic staff members have to review the formal curriculum whereby Service-Learning can be incorporated in the combination of the following: (1) individual

subjects; (2) optional learning experience; and/or (3) non-credited but part of the learning expectation (graduation criteria).

Managing the Resistance of Change: Dalin (1978) and Dalin et al. (1993) argue that there are four significant barriers (resistance) to change: (1) value barriers; (2) power barriers; (3) psychological barriers and (4) practical barriers. Staff members may experience these four types of resistances to change. Thus, they have to manage themselves in adjustment to the change (incorporation of Service-Learning). Moreover, they also have to manage the possible resistance from students in the process. By doing so, academic staff can connect the service to learning objectives and state clearly the rationale and benefits of using Service-Learning as a means of learning.

Staff of Student Development Centre

Service-Learning requires students to have opportunities in exploring themselves through service experience. Staff members of the Student Development Centre do not need to change their roles in all-round development of students.

In addition, they have to act as ‘mediator’ linking students, academic staff and community partners (NGOs) together. This linkage will facilitate academic staff to identify and explore a variety of service opportunities in meeting students’ learning needs.

In reviewing the roles of academic staff and SDC staff members, the effective collaboration among staff members will be the key factor in the success of implementing Service-Learning in the College.

7.5.5 Training for Students and Staff Members

As identified by informants in my study, training programmes for students are important in preparing them to adapt to service projects and in facilitating their learning. These training programmes include: briefing sessions, pre-service training, sharing sessions etc.

Most students lack experience with both extracting and making meaning from service experience and in merging it with other academic learning strategies. Therefore, even an exemplary reflective journal assignment will yield, with sufficient support, uneven, responses. The College can provide: (1) *Learning support such as opportunities to acquire skills for gleaning the learning from the service context* (i.e. participant-observer skills); (2) *Examples of how to successfully complete assignments* (i.e. making past exemplary student papers and reflective journals available for students to peruse).

On the other hand, as discussed in **Section 7.5.3**, staff members have to manage their resistance to change. In this regard, training programmes may also play an important role to build up staff members' competence in the change process. In my opinion, the following training themes are suggested in designing and implementing training programmes for staff members and students in the College (**Table 7.6**).

Table 7.6 : Overview of Training Programmes for Students and Staff Members

Training Themes	For Students	For Staff Members
Orientation: Conception of Service-Learning	Essential	Essential
Experiential Learning Model	Essential	Essential
Use of Reflection Tools	Essential	Essential
Use of Service-Learning Handbook/ Manual	Essential	Essential
Operation of Service-Learning Projects	Not Applicable	Essential
Designing Service-Learning Subjects	Not Applicable	Essential
Working with Community Partners (NGOs)	Not Applicable	Essential
Pre-service Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-reflection • Characteristics of service users • Practical skills in serving people 	Essential	Optional

The above list is not exhaustive in nature. It provides a framework whereby the College can consider additional training opportunities for students and staff

members.

7.6 Importance of Reflection in Service-Learning

There is no doubt of the importance of reflection in the Service-Learning process. Reflection is a process by which service learners think critically about their experiences. Reflection can happen through writing, speaking, listening, and reading about the service experiences. Learning happens through a mix of theory and practice, thought and action, observation and interaction. Reflection allows students to learn from themselves.

Without reflection, students simply go through the Service, remain cognitively unaffected by the experience, and left with their personal ignorance and biases reinforced or unexamined. (Heffernan, 2001, p. 27)

In my research findings, the staff members implementing Service-Learning projects employed the reflective journal, sharing sessions, students' self evaluation and evaluation meetings guided by staff members as a means of reflection. According to the staff informants, the reflection process is not systematic or purposefully directed to facilitate students' learning. The reason may be that the staff members are not aware of effective ways to implement Service-Learning projects, so training on effective reflection has to be conducted for staff members.

In order to improve the outcomes of Service-Learning projects, the staff members have to review their practice in facilitating student participants' self reflection throughout the Service-Learning process.

Hatcher and Bringle (1997) "believe that effective reflection activities (a) link experience to learning objectives, (b) are guided, (c) occur regularly, (d) allow feedback and assessment, and (e) include the clarification of values" (p.157). Students who participate in reflection with these elements better appreciate education as it relates to the world outside their classroom. They also find this type

of reflection experience more enriching and are more likely to become lifelong community servants (volunteers).

During personal reflection, students are asked to consider their personal thoughts and feelings about the experience. Students should consider how they were challenged, why they reacted in particular ways, what their thoughts were, and why they had those thoughts.

Personal reflection also encourages students to think about how others may have reacted and to acknowledge their perspectives. Personal reflection encourages students to consider how the experience affected them, how they have grown to learn more about themselves, and how they will use this knowledge about themselves in the future.

During academic reflection, students are asked to make connections between their service experiences and particular academic topics, concepts and theories. Students should consider what the service experience is teaching them, how they are learning from it, and why it is important. Students should begin to connect their academic discipline to the service experience by asking questions and making observations. Academic reflection should incite students to analyze information and apply it to practical situations.

After understanding the importance of reflection, it is essential to look at the tools used in effective reflection. Speaking, writing, various activities and multimedia/performing arts are methods used for reflection in Service-Learning. They are known as the 'options for reflection.' Cairn & Coble (1993) offers the following options for reflection (**Table 7.7**):

Table 7.7 : Options for Reflection

Speaking	Writing
One-on-one conferences with teacher/leader Class/group discussions Small group discussion Oral reports to group Discussions with community members or experts on an issue Public speaking on project Teach material to younger student	Essay, expert paper, research paper, final paper Project report Learning log - kept daily, weekly or after each service experience Guide for future volunteers/ participants Self-evaluation or evaluation of programme Newspaper, magazine and other published article
Activities	Multimedia/ Performing Arts
Analysis and problem solving Information gathering needed to serve or understand project Planning new future projects Allocating programme budget Recruiting peers to serve Recognition and celebration programmes Simulation or role-playing games Training other students and/or programme leaders	Photo, slide show Scrapbook Interactive computers Paintings, drawings, collages, etc. Dance, music or theater presentations

To maximize the impact of Service-Learning on students (in terms of learning and personal development), academic staff, service coordinators/ mentors can apply the above-named tools (options) responsively, flexibly and effectively to facilitate students' learning. According to the data collected, it may not be easy to apply all of the reflection tools. So I recommend that a training programme for students and staff members concerning the use of reflection tools is essential (Table 7.6, p.174).

Furthermore, the staff members of the College can apply 'The 4 Cs of Reflection' as identified by Eyler, Giles and Schmiedes (1996):

Continuous in time frame. An ongoing part of the learner's education and service involvement, this allows students to formulate new ideas following Kolb's Cycle of Learning.

Connected to the intellectual and academic needs of those involved. This is where the connections between real life experiences and course material are compared and become relevant.

Challenging to assumptions and complacency. Reflection must challenge students and provoke thought in a more critical way.

Contextualized in terms of design and setting. Faculty determines if the reflection is appropriate for the context of the Service-Learning experience, thus adding to the linkage between thinking about course content and actually applying it.

7.7 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, I have discussed the issues related to the implementation of Service-Learning as a college-wide practice. Based on my findings, I found that Service-Learning will lead to improvement in students' academic learning, all-round development and thus enhancement in their employability after graduation. So I can conclude that Service-Learning will enhance students' competence in various areas.

In applying the change management perspectives, strategies for development of Service-Learning in the College were examined and discussed. The four barriers to change were also identified. Measures to incorporate Service-Learning can be categorized into four categories: (1) Strategies at College level; (2) Strategies at programme level; (3) Role division among staff members and (4) Training for students and staff members.

It is agreed that an essential element of Service-Learning is linking 'service' with 'academic learning'. I have highlighted the importance of reflection in the Service-Learning process. Moreover, recommendations on the effective and flexible use of various reflection tools are outlined for staff members' reference.

Chapter 8 Summary, Conclusions and Implications

8.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents a summary of the major findings of the study. It concludes the discussion of the findings' implications for the development of Service-Learning in post-secondary education in Hong Kong. Students in Hong Kong are facing challenges arising from competition between themselves and the ever-changing global environment. Traditional teaching and learning processes may not cater for students' learning needs. According to my findings, Service-Learning can help to enhance students' competence in self understanding, social skills and civic awareness. It may, therefore, be an education initiative for further development of post-secondary education in Hong Kong.

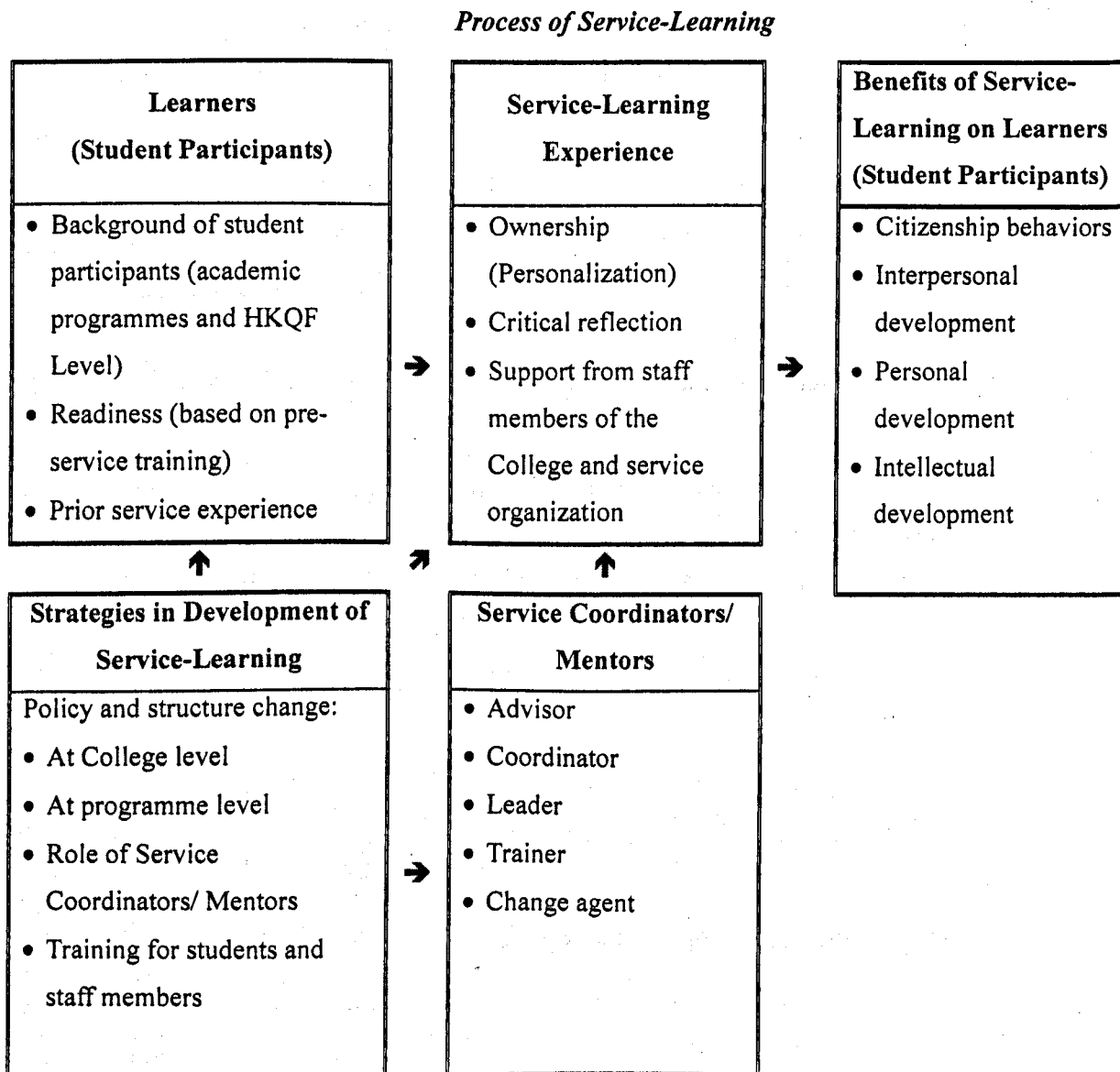
Recommendations based on findings as presented in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 and discussion in Chapter 7 will also be examined. The chapter concludes with my personal reflections on the research journey.

8.2 Reflection on Rationale and Focus of the Study

This study has examined, within the context of a post-secondary education institute in Hong Kong, the practice of Service-Learning as an educational initiative. A qualitative case study method was employed to explore the experiences of both the student participants and the staff members involved in the Service-Learning process. Data collection took place in the form of semi-structured individual interviews, focus group and student reflective journal. Eleven students from different academic programmes and at different HKQF levels were selected as the informants. In addition, two Student Development Officers and a lecturer on the Associate Degree in Social Work programme were selected for interviews.

On the basis of the findings of the study, I have modified the framework for the development of Service-Learning initially generated from literature on Service-Learning. Through discussion on the findings and my personal reflection on the practice of Service-Learning, a dynamic model for the development of Service-Learning as college-wide practice has been developed (Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1 : Dynamic Model for Development of Service-Learning



This dynamic model is different from my conceptual framework developed in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.7, p.54). Based on my findings, I revised the framework by adding the policy framework (strategies in development of Service-Learning) into

the College's organizational context. Student and staff informants provided contextual reflection on the College's implementation of Service-Learning, so that I can recommend the four categories of strategies in Service-Learning development.

The research process has enabled me to examine Service-Learning and students' learning process in a more dynamic way than simply reviewing others' research. Staff members, the College, students, social service organizations and service users all play a role in contributing to the success of Service-Learning. Learning some s from different stages of the Service-Learning process.

My model presented here provides a framework for educators, student support staff (SAO) and post-secondary education institutes in planning, designing and implementing Service-Learning initiatives in the future.

8.3 Review of the Study: Research Questions Addressed

This section provides a summary of the findings related to each of my research questions. In Chapter 1, I proposed that the study was designed to address identified research questions associated with the operation and outcomes of Service-Learning:

(1) What benefits, if any, do students derive from their Service-Learning experiences?

According to the findings, both the student and staff informants agree that involvement in Service-Learning projects will benefits students in various aspects. Most of the students shared their positive experience in serving people. In reviewing my summary of findings, four categories of benefits are identified: (1) citizenship behaviors; (2) interpersonal development; (3) personal development and (4) intellectual development. (Figure 8.1, p.180)

Throughout the service experience, the students can have opportunities in examining and discussing social issues and social problems affecting service users they served. The service setting provides the background and platform for the students to reflect on their own values and their understanding of society. Moreover, the data suggest

that the Service-Learning experience contributed to the students' awareness of the importance of serving other people. In the process, students could develop their sense of citizenship and identity as a helper to serve those in needs.

As the students have to be involved in designing, planning, implementing and evaluating the service projects, they have to meet and interact with strangers in the service process. These strangers include service users, workers of social service organizations (community partners and NGOs), students from different academic programmes and volunteers in the community. The service experiences allow students to explore and experience different social situations and scenarios that they have never met in their classroom learning. The process helps students to develop their social skills and attitudes in relating to others.

In the Service-Learning process, the students have various opportunities to reflect on their thinking, feeling, values and experience. They become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses, personal values, competences and attitudes in relating to others. Through the give-and-take process of serving people, they improve in self-confidence and gain a sense of satisfaction.

Service experiences also require students to apply and integrate their classroom learning into practice in realistic social situations. On many occasions, they have to learn and acquire new skills in serving people in need. Through self-reflection on their work and practice in Service-Learning projects, students have developed a habit of self-reflection. In doing so, the students' understanding of their classroom learning and learning capabilities has improved. Many of my informants are studying the Associate Degree in Social Work at different HKQF levels. They stated that involvement in Service-Learning projects provides opportunities for them to explore and understanding the service needs of the service users and they feel more confident in acting as a social worker in the future.

(2) Are particular types of students more or less likely to benefit from Service-Learning?

Owing to my limitations in accessing students from different academic programmes

and non-participants of Service-Learning, I cannot generalize my research findings to the whole college. However, as I purposefully selected students from different academic programmes or students at different HKQF levels, I reached eleven student participants of Service-Learning. According to the informants, all of them stated that they improved in different aspects. So I can conclude that most of the students involved in Service-Learning projects will benefit.

As I have discussed in **Section 2.3**, the students of the College are typical 'academically low achievers' in their previous academic life. I have observed that they would easily generate a negative self-image and self efficacy, a lower sense of hope and feel less privileged in planning their future. They are not clear of the future and have no confidence in themselves. They have poor academic self-concept and low attainment value in learning (Lau & Chan, 2001).

In reviewing the background of students in general, I find that Service-Learning is a means to develop the students of the College. Apart from academic achievement, the participants in Service-Learning projects can develop a strong sense of self-identity and improvement in self-confidence. In Chapter 7, I also examined that Service-Learning will enhance students' competences and so with their employability after graduation.

(3) In the construction of an ideal Service-Learning environment for the enhancement of learning, what factors should be taken into account?

In reviewing literature and research reports on Service-Learning, I devised my conceptual framework on the development of Service-Learning (**Figure 3.7**, p.54). In the conceptual framework, I placed more emphasis on the service experience, the learners (student participants) and the roles played by the service coordinators/mentors.

In fact, the student participants' previous experience in community service (volunteerism) and their readiness in participating Service-Learning projects are crucial to their success in the Service-Learning process.

If the students are not 'ready' or if they have not understood the rationale and benefits of Service-Learning for them, they may have relatively 'negative' experience in the service process. The readiness of the students can be improved by the availability and quality of the pre-service training.

In searching for relevant service opportunities for the student participants, the consideration of 'student ownership' is found to be very important. 'Student Ownership', on the basis of my findings, is enhanced by three factors: (1) freedom of choice in selecting service opportunities: (2) pre-service training and (3) students' autonomy in planning and designing the service projects. Moreover, student and staff informants indicate that support from the senior management of the College is a 'must' for any success in service projects.

On the other hand, service coordinators/ mentors have to create an appropriate learning environment for students. In such a learning environment, students can experience challenging and meaningful learning experiences. To create an appropriate learning environment, the service coordinators/ mentors play different roles such as advisor, coordinator, leader, trainer, information provider, project manager. More importantly, they have to play the change agent role to review and change the formal curriculum and the policy and structure of the College.

Based on the findings, it is suggested that there should be changes in the policy and structure of the College. For the benefit of the students, I suggest that Service-Learning should become a college-wide practice. In responding to integrating Service-Learning into individual academic programmes, different strategies are suggested and discussed in Section 7.5.

(4) How should Service-Learning be formulated to enhance students' learning and integration of experience? What model would be most suitable/ appropriate to the students in this local context?

By definition, Service-Learning is an experiential learning and education method whereby students are exposed to the service settings. In the service setting, they have to explore the service needs of the service users and design appropriate service

projects for the service user groups. In doing service projects, students have to experience the collaborative process with other people, the process of integrating classroom learning into practice, and the responsive problem-solving process. The above processes were identified by the student informants in my research.

To enhance students' learning through the Service-Learning process, both student and staff informants emphasize that the service process is important. For the students, the freedom of choice in selecting service opportunities is important to meet their own learning needs. In addition, they have to be prepared and own the service experience. A distinctive finding is that most of the students identify with the benefits of the Service-Learning process, and they recommend the College to review the formal curriculum to provide more space for them to participate in Service-Learning projects. For the staff members, students' commitment in service delivery can determine their success and learning outcomes in the Service-Learning process.

From the above findings, I further recommend the college to incorporate Service-Learning into college-wide practice. Academic staff members have to review the formal curriculum and incorporate Service-Learning into the teaching and learning process.

Three Service-Learning models as identified by Berry & Chisholm (1999) are found appropriate to the College's context. These models are: (1) Course or Module Related Model; (2) Cohesive Curriculum Model and (3) Non-Credited but Part of the Learning Expectations Model. Detailed discussion of these models can be found in **Section 7.5.3**. It is suggested that no one single model is particularly effective or suited to all situations. Thus, a combination of the three models may be executed to fit the learning culture of a particular discipline.

8.4 Implications for Service-Learning in Post-Secondary Education

The present study provides a foundation for further research on Service-Learning in post-secondary education. On the basis of the findings, a dynamic model for Service-Learning has been developed. In the model, the student participants, the service experience, the service coordinators/ mentors and the organization are

considered. Based on this model, I can conclude that the contextual factors need to be considered. A particular service opportunity may be beneficial to a particular group of students, but it may not be appropriate for other groups of students. Students' learning needs, expectations, readiness are some of the factors to be considered.

In recent years, Service-Learning has been implemented in various universities and post-secondary education institutes in Hong Kong. According to the literature and research on Service-Learning in post-secondary education, the benefits of Service-Learning have only been examined using quantitative research methods. Thus my study, by taking a qualitative approach, fills a gap in previous research.

8.5 Areas for Further Research and Limitations of the Present Study

Service-Learning in Hong Kong is still a relative newcomer to the educational scene. In addition, the application of qualitative research methodology in examining the experience and thinking of the student participants and staff members involved in Service-Learning is not common in Hong Kong.

To continue to better understand and explore the application of Service-Learning in education, practitioners, researchers, and students of education need to continue to examine the elements of Service-Learning, its effect on students' learning and personal development and the trend in its development in Hong Kong. Based on the findings of this study and the educational literature, the following suggestions for further research may be of benefit:

Universities and post-secondary education institutes can conduct systematic and holistic evaluation of the Service-Learning process and its outcomes on students, community partners and the service users being served. Research of this type can be conducted in a number of universities so that researchers can compare the outcomes of Service-Learning within different academic and administrative cultures.

I identified different Service-Learning models to be appropriate for the development of Service-Learning in the College. Research on the impact of a particular model on

students' learning and organizational culture would be of great value.

There are also limitations in the present study. The focus is on one of the self-financed post-secondary education institutes in Hong Kong. The characteristics of the students in a self-financed education institute might be different from those in government-funded institutions. For example, the overall academic performance of students in the latter seems to be better than that of the former. Moreover, the institution under examination is not a well-developed institution, the academic programmes, facilities and support could not be compared to well-developed post-secondary education institutes. All of these factors mean that the findings are highly specific to this particular context and population, uncovering the interaction of significant factors characteristic of that phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). I cannot claim that I have examined the whole picture of Service-Learning development in post-secondary education in Hong Kong but my findings may be able to be applied to other similar post-secondary education institutions in Hong Kong.

Secondly, there was a change in data collection plan. In my original plan, my target informants were full-time and part-time students of ADSW programme. As one of the teaching staff members of the ADSW programme, I could invite students to participate in the present study easily. Moreover, teaching staff and representatives from NGOs involved in the Service-Learning projects would also be selected for interview (in form of focus group), in order to explore the issues under examination from different perspectives.

However, as I left the College owing to personal reasons, the availability of informants (students, teaching staff and representatives from NGOs) was limited. In facing this situation, I had to change the target informants from current students of ADSW programme to other sources. Thus, I expanded my target informants from students studying ADSW programme to ADSW graduates and students from other academic programmes. On the other hand, I could not include representatives from NGOs in the present study. Such a change in my data collection plan has affected the number and nature of informants and so the representativeness of the samples.

Furthermore, owing to constraints in time and resources, I could not involve all of the stakeholders concerned with the topic. For example, it would also be useful to examine the viewpoints of the senior management of the institution, the parents (of students involved in Service-Learning), the non-participants in Service-Learning and the service users of the Service-Learning projects.

I applied a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative interviews, focus group and reflective journals were the data collection methods. In making the decision to use qualitative research, I wanted to gather the informants' in depth opinions and responses, rather than collecting a mass of quantified data for analysis. Locating my research with this hermeneutic paradigm, a rich description of the Service-Learning phenomena was proffered

Finally, the present study was, to some extent, limited by my own bias and interpretation for "the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis" (Merriam, 1998, p.42). Being a former academic staff member and coordinator of the Service-Learning projects meant that I had a vested interest in the programmes' success and a mixture of relationships with the student participants from mentor, instructor to friends. The knowledge gained from my study is thus more concrete, more contextual and more "developed by reader-interpretation – readers bring to a case study their own experience and understanding, which lead to generalizations when new data for the case are added to old data" (Merriam, 1998, p.32).

8.6 Personal Reflection on My Research Journey

Conducting a research project for a dissertation is an individual undertaking, not a group project. Throughout the journey, I have gained a better understanding of my competence and capacity in academic and personal enhancement.

At the beginning of my EdD studies, I had already selected this research topic for my dissertation. Since the academic year of 2009, I had been in the position of Service-Learning Coordinator of ADSW programme of the College. I could use an 'insider' point of view to examine the strengths and limitations of Service-Learning

in the ADSW programme. An ongoing, continuous improvement in the planning, organizing and delivery of the Service-Learning projects seemed to be made possible. The academic staff and the student participants were more than willing to be my informants as the research project will facilitate the development of Service-Learning in the College. Preliminary approval from the senior management and my immediate supervisor were obtained.

However, owing to the change in senior personnel, the structure and focus of the ADSW programme was changed. In the meantime, I left the College. I became an 'outsider' in conducting my research. The availability of Service-Learning projects, informants and resources was, therefore, limited by this change. In facing this situation, I had to change the target informants from current students of ADSW and use other sources. On the other hand, I have gained the benefits of some increased objectivity and minimization of role conflicts in examining the Service-Learning development in the College.

By the end of August 2011, I had conducted two individual interviews with SDC staff members (Student Development Officers), two individual interviews with students and one focus group (students). It seemed that the data collected were not sufficiently 'adequate' for me in developing my thesis. Under the continuous encouragement of my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Trahar, I tried to contact more students and academic staff for interviews.

This experience is so meaningful to me and I have realized how important planning is to our success. Planning for failure, flexibility and responsiveness in selecting the 'right' informants, and tolerance of uncertainty are the 'musts' in conducting research.

In my previous experience as a researcher in my Master of Arts (Social Work) studies, I paid great attention on finding the 'right' informants, answering the 'right' questions at the 'right' moment and collecting the 'right' data in completing my research and dissertation process. However, it was a very stressful process, as I could never know who were the 'right' informants, what are the 'right' questions, what is the 'right' moment and what are the 'right' data. The results were quite

unsatisfactory because I was too eager to do things 'right' and I missed some important insights from the data collected.

In this study, I tried my best to be 'relaxed'. I looked into the literature and picked up some important issues and research areas in developing my interview guide for individual interviews and the focus group. The benefit of the semi-structured interview guide is that it allows great flexibility for the researcher in responding to informants' responses.

In addition, I allowed the informants to free flow their ideas concerning my core subject area – Service-Learning. Although this led to quite unstructured responses and give rise to difficulties in data analysis, it provided opportunities and spaces for collecting plenty of data to address the subject area of Service-Learning. In fact, in the data analysis process, almost all of the data collected were meaningful to me in constructing and challenging my own viewpoint on the subject area. I structured my wording in introducing myself as a student researcher, the significance of the research and ethical issues in conducting the research. These strategies facilitated the development of a genuine and trustful relationship with my informants.

In this dissertation process, I have really felt and experienced the notion of researcher as a reflective learner. By reflective learner, I have developed a habit of 'reflecting' on my work, my research methodology, my data, my findings and even my reflection from time to time. New insights were explored or developed throughout this self-reflection process. Throughout the process, from developing a research topic, writing a proposal, developing data collection instruments, data collection and analysis, periodic review of progress, to completing the dissertation writing, I have to reflect on my work continuously, seriously and frankly.

Once I started my journey, I enlarged and enriched my knowledge on the topic area: Service-Learning. Through reading, thinking and re-searching relevant articles, dissertations and research reports, I found that my present knowledge on the topic area was inadequate. However, I had to use my limited time and resources effectively to complete the dissertation, so I had to make decisions and choices in selecting the most 'appropriate' and 'relevant' materials to study. The process was

painful but fruitful indeed!

In reviewing the whole process, I have found the power of autonomous learning. The dissertation process has required me to become self-motivated, self-directed and self-disciplined. If I could not monitor myself (either in physical or mental conditions), I could never have completed the process. Such observations could also be applied to Service-Learning. If the institution could provide room for the students to plan, design, organize, coordinate and implement the Service-Learning projects by their own effort, the outcomes of Service-Learning to students and to the service users of the projects would become greater.

The process has not only allowed me to develop my thesis, reflect on my learning and clarify my ideas, it has also facilitated the re-examination of my blind spots and my learning attitudes. The process was in fact very 'painful' and 'challenging'. In the dissertation seminars conducted by Bristol University and City University, the idea of 'Never Give Up' resonated very powerfully with me. It encouraged me to continue my work when the progress was difficult and has enabled me to feel that I have achieved a satisfactory outcome.

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Appendix A :
Student's Reflective Journal on Service Learning
服務學習個人反思札記

Name of Student (學生姓名): _____

Program Mode: Full Time/ Part Time 學習模式: 全日制/ 兼讀制

Year of Study: Project Yi Jin/ PFY/ FY/ 1 / 2 / 3

年級: 毅進/ 通用文憑/ 高級文憑基礎年/ 高級文憑 1/2/3/ 副學士先修/ 副學士
基礎年/ 1/2

Part A: Basic Information on Service Project

甲部: 服務學習的基本資料

Date (日期): _____ Time (時間): _____

Name of Organization (服務機構): _____

Learning Objectives (學習目標):

Part B: Profile of Service-Learning Experience

乙部: 服務學習經驗的紀錄

Characteristics of Service Users (服務對象的特點):

Program Planning of the Service-Learning Experience (服務內容及程序摘要):

Part C: Application and learning of knowledge, competence and skills arising from the Service-Learning Experience

丙部：服務學習對個人應用所學、學習新知識和技能有何影響

Part D: Self Evaluation – To what extent do the learning objective(s) is/ are achieved? Please state the reason(s).

丁部：自我評估－服務學習的目標能否達到，請列出原因

Part E: Observation, Feeling, Reflection and Action Plan (At least 500 words)

戊部：個人觀察、感受、反思及行動計劃(最少 500 字)

Appendix B :

Focus Group Discussion Guide (Students)

Target Informant

- Participants (students) involved in Service-Learning Projects

Focus Groups Profile

- Gender diversity – equal numbers of females and males, if possible
- Approximately 4-12 informants
- Try to include a cross section of informants, i.e. informants coming from different academic programs

Roles and Responsibilities

- Focus group facilitator asks the questions and monitors the discussion flow.
- The conversation will be fast moving. Using a note taker and tape-recorder helps to insure that good answers are not missed inadvertently. Note taker should try to write down everything that is said, using actual quotes, not just summarize answers
- Researcher compiles notes and information from focus groups for report or presentation to stakeholders.

Format for the Discussion Groups

- Casual discussion setting
- Circle setup
- Do not hand out the questions to the informants in advance in order to receive fresh, off the cuff opinions
- Every informant needs to talk – encourage them with both verbal and non-verbal cues that everyone's input is important
- Solicit feedback from quiet informants
- Watch the facilitator's own non-verbal communications cues – a focus group is about gathering information; it is not our forum to share facilitator's opinions
- Do not let any one voice dominate the discussion
- At the end of the session, have each informant sign a participation sheet to follow up with a personal thank you note
- Depending upon the informants' willingness to participate, the discussion should take approximately 45 to 50 minutes.

Question Guide

- Ask questions generally but follow up with add-on questions if the informant appears to have more to say.
- Get feedback on each question from at least half the group.
- Also feel free to change the order of the questions if that makes more sense for your informant.
- Plan to provide the final results to informants.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is your general impression on Service-Learning Project?
2. What is/ are your personal reason(s) in participating in Service-Learning Project?
3. How would you develop your personal learning objective(s) in participating in Service-Learning Project?
4. What areas do you perform best in the service-learning process? Please suggest a real situation to illustrate this issue.
5. What areas do you perform less desirable in the service-learning process? Please suggest a real situation to illustrate this issue.
6. In your opinion, what benefits, if any, would be derived from service-learning experiences?
7. In your own experience (or according to your classmates), what factors would facilitate the learning and benefits in service-learning experience?
8. Please suggest some recommendations for the improvement of implementation of service-learning in different aspects (e.g. recruitment, selection and training of students, choice of service-learning opportunities, operation and logistics issues, school-organization collaboration etc.)
9. Any follow up actions necessary for the present service-learning projects?

Wrap-Up

For the wrap-up, thank informants again for their help. Review the reason the facilitator is doing this from the setup discussion. Let the informants know how their input will be used and offer to send them the results. Remember to have them to sign in to send thank you notes.

Appendix C1 :

Interviewing Guide for Qualitative Interview (Students)

Target Informant

- Students involved in Service-Learning Project

Questions to be Asked

1. What is your general impression on Service-Learning Project?
2. What is/ are your personal reason(s) in participating in Service-Learning Project?
3. How would you develop your personal learning objective(s) in participating in Service-Learning Project?
4. What areas do you perform best in the service-learning process? Please suggest a real situation to illustrate this issue.
(For those non-participants in Service-Learning Project, no need to ask this question)
5. What areas do you perform less desirable in the service-learning process? Please suggest a real situation to illustrate this issue.
(For those non-participants in Service-Learning Project, no need to ask this question)
6. In your opinion, what benefits, if any, would be derived from service-learning experiences?
7. In your own experience (or according to your classmates), what factors would facilitate the learning and benefits in service-learning experience?
8. Please suggest some recommendations for the improvement of implementation of service-learning in different aspects (e.g. recruitment, selection and training of students, choice of service-learning opportunities, operation and logistics issues, school-organization collaboration etc.)
9. In your opinion, are there any particular types of students more or less likely to benefit from service-learning?
10. Any follow up actions necessary for the present service-learning projects?

Appendix C2 :

Interviewing Guide for Qualitative Interview (Staff)

Target Informant

- Teaching staff/ mentors/ instructors involved in Service-Learning Projects

Questions to be Asked

1. What is the general impression of the students involved in service-learning experience?
2. What areas do the students perform best in the service-learning process?
3. What areas do the students perform most undesirable in the service-learning process?
4. In your observation, what benefits, if any, do students derive from their service-learning experiences?
5. In your opinion, are there any particular types of students more or less likely to benefit from service-learning?
6. In the construction of a better service-learning environment for the benefits of students and service users, what factors should be taken into account?
7. Please suggest some recommendations for the improvement of implementation of service-learning in different aspects (e.g. recruitment, selection and training of students, choice of service-learning opportunities, operation and logistics issues, school-organization collaboration etc.)
8. Any follow up actions necessary for the present service-learning projects?

Appendix D: Coding System for Data Analysis

Category	Secondary Code	Primary Code	Description
Benefits of S-L Project	Citizenship Behavior (BCB)	B-HR	Helping people
		B-RR	Reflection of own role in society
		B-RSP	Reflection on social phenomenon
		B-UDC	Understanding different culture
	Interpersonal Development (BIPD)	B-IPS	Interpersonal skills
		B-L&T	Leadership & teamwork
		B-LL	Becoming good listener
	Intellectual Development (BID)	B-AL	Application of learning
		B-LSU	Learning from service user
		B-LW	Learning from social worker
		B-PSS	Problem solving skills
		B-RSWK	Reflection on social work knowledge
		B-TC	Technical skills
	Personal Development (BPD)	B-Accept	Acceptance
		B-Con	Self confidence
		B-Flex	Learn to be flexible
		B-I	Involvement
		B-LHN	Learning & understanding human nature
		B-RGR	Reflection on gender role
		B-RLA	Reflection on life attitude
		B-RS	Reflection on self
		B-Sat	Sense of satisfaction

Category	Secondary Code	Primary Code	Description
Motivation of Participants	Extrinsic (ME)	M-A	Award
		M-Cert	Certification/ Recognition
	Intrinsic (MI)	M-Con	Contribution to HKCT
		M-Meaning	Meaningful work
		M-NExp	New experience
		M-NLO	New learning opportunities
		M-Sat	Satisfaction

Category	Secondary Code	Primary Code	Description
Support from Service Coordinator & Hosting Organization	Programming: Planning & Coordination (SPC)	S-Co	Coordination among different parties
		S-GS	Goal setting
		S-Net	Network
		S-P	Planning
	Staff Involvement (SSI)	S-A	Accessibility of staff
		S-FU	Follow up action
		S-SI	Staff involvement
	Resources Support (SRS)	S-Fin	Financial support
		S-PE	Physical environment & facilities
		S-Procedure	Policy & procedure
		S-SSM	Support from senior management
	Platform for Student Development & Reflection (SPD)	S-Curriculum	Curriculum-based practice of S-L
		S-I&E	Interaction & exchange among volunteers
		S-IV	Involvement of volunteers
		S-LO	Learning from others
		S-PR	Platform for reflection
		S-SOB	Sense of belongingness
		S-Time	Time
		S-Train	Training
		S-U	Understanding

Category	Secondary Code	Primary Code	Description
Qualities of Participants	Value & Attitudes (QVA)	Q-C	Commitment
		Q-Ethic	Ethical
		Q-I	Initiative
		Q-PC	Patience & care
		Q-R1	Responsibility
		Q-R2	Responsiveness
	Competence (QPP)	Q-Flex	Flexibility
		Q-P	Planning & preparation
		Q-R3	Reflection

Category	Secondary Code	Primary Code	Description
Role of Mentor/ Instructor/ Service Coordinator	Task Role (RTK)	Ro-A	Advisor
		Ro-Co	Coordinator
		Ro-E	Evaluator
		Ro-Fac	Facilitator
		Ro-IP	Information provider
		Ro-L	Leader
		Ro-PM	Project Manager
		Ro-T	Trainer
	Maintenance Role (RMT)	Ro-S	Supporter

Category	Secondary Code	Primary Code	Description
Recom- mendation (Issues in Improving SL Implementation)	Operation of SL Projects (ROP)	R-C	Continuity of service and support (network)
		R-CAD	Collaboration among different parties
		R-E	Evaluation of SL outcomes
		R-Man	Manpower
		P-Man	Manpower
		P-C	Heavy curriculum for students
		R-P	Improvement in planning
		R-SC	Steering committee
		P-P&P	Policy & planning
		P-RC	Reluctant to cooperation
		P-SI	Student involvement
		P-Time	Time
		P-ASO	Availability of service opportunities
	Inter-disciplinary Collaboration (RIC)	CAP-Task	Task goal by non-social work students
		CAP-Process	Process goals by social work students
	Conceptualization of SL Projects (RCP)	R-Freedom	Freedom of choice among different SL opportunities
		P-CSLP	Choice of SL opportunities
		R-ISO	In-depth service opportunities
		R-R	Resources input
		R-Reflection	Reflection on rationale and operation of SL
	Pre-Service Training (RPST)	R-SBR	Sharing & briefing in recruiting volunteers
		P-Culture	Different culture
		P-PS	Psychological preparation/ readiness of students

Category	Secondary Code	Primary Code	Description
Model of SL Delivery	SL Opportunities (DSLO)	MD-SSG	Social service group (Self-programming)
		MD-SDC	Individual projects organized by Student Development Centre
		MD-AP	Interdisciplinary collaboration among academic programs
	SL Requirements on Students (DRS)	SR-FC	Formal curriculum
		SR-GC	Graduation criterion
		SR-R	Record
	Structure of SL (DSSL)	SSL-F	Formal education (Curriculum-based)
		SSL-I	Informal education
		SSL-N	Non-formal education
	Sources of Reflection (DSR)	DR-I	Instructors/ teaching staff
		DR-SE	Students' self evaluation
		DR-SSO	Feedback from social service organizations
	Evaluation of Formal Education Model (DEF)	SFC-M	Motivation to serve people
		BFC-E	Exposure

Appendix E1 :
CONSENT FORM (Participant's Copy)

Title of Project: An Exploration of Participants' Experience in Service-Learning in a Self-Financing Higher Education Institution in Hong Kong

Principal Supervisor: Dr. Sheila Trahar

Student Researcher: WONG Kam Chung

I understand what this research project is designed to explore. What I will be asked to do has been explained to me. I agree to take part in the project, realizing that I can withdraw at any time without having to give a reason for my decision.

I have read and understand the information provided by the researcher. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this research project, associated journaling, interviews and focus groups, audio/ video taping of focus groups and interviews (wherever appropriate), realizing that I can withdraw my consent at any time.

I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Principal Supervisor: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Student Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E2 :
CONSENT FORM (Student Researcher's Copy)

Title of Project: An Exploration of Participants' Experience in Service-Learning in a Self-Financing Higher Education Institution in Hong Kong

Principal Supervisor: Dr. Sheila Trahar

Student Researcher: WONG Kam Chung

I understand what this research project is designed to explore. What I will be asked to do has been explained to me. I agree to take part in the project, realizing that I can withdraw at any time without having to give a reason for my decision.

I have read and understand the information provided by the researcher. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this research project, associated journaling, interviews and focus groups, audio/ video taping of focus groups and interviews (wherever appropriate), realizing that I can withdraw my consent at any time.

I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify me in any way.

Name of Participant: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Principal Supervisor: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Student Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Appendix F : Proposal on Service-Learning

Introduction

In reviewing of the nature and academic achievement of our students (ADSW programme), our target students are characterized by their “humble” academic performance and relatively weak in conceptual thinking and motivation to learn.

To enhance the knowledge, competences and self development of our ADSW students, the implementation of Service-Learning (ServL for short) is found to be an effective and meaningful way.

In this proposal, we would propose a framework for understanding ServL. An operational guidelines on developing ServL in CHSS would also be found.

Definition of Service-Learning

Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. (Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, NSLC)

Even though there are many different interpretations of service-learning as well as different objectives and contexts, we can say that there is a core concept upon which all seem to agree:

Service-learning combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity change both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content.

Conceptualization of Service-Learning in CHSS

We suggest that ServL would be an integral part of our ADSW programme. It is not necessary for students to have much input in addition to normal schooling.

The term “Service-Learning” could be re-defined as interaction between “Service” and “Learning”, a simple proposition linking these terms together would be:

Doing SERVICE to LEARN more, and applying LEARNING to do SERVICE.

Service-Learning Opportunities

ServL program for students in CHSS could be classified into three categories:

A. Built-in in Curriculum

Subject Code and Name Code	Mode	Year	ServL Opportunities and Themes	Remarks
SW201 Social Welfare in Hong Kong	FT	Y1	Agency visits and direct contact with service users	Use of additional hrs
SW201 Social Welfare in Hong Kong	PT	Y1		
SW202 Sociology and Hong Kong Society	FT	Y1	Field observation	Use of additional hrs
SW202 Sociology and Hong Kong Society	PT	Y1	Field observation	
SW221 Foundations of Social Work and Human Service Professions	FT	Y1	Agency visits and direct contact with service users	Use of additional hrs
SW221 Foundations of Social Work and Human Service Professions	PT	Y1		
SW323 Practice with Communities in Social Work and Human Service Professions	FT	Y1	Field observation & community study	Use of additional hrs
SW323 Practice with Communities in Social Work and Human Service Professions	PT	Y2	Field observation & community study	
SW331 Social Field Study & Project Management in Human Service Organizations	FT	Y2	Community field study and development of service funding proposal	Use of additional hrs
SW331 Social Field Study & Project Management in Human Service Organizations	PT	Y2		
SW326 Working with Deprived Groups	FT & PT	Y2	Agency visits and direct contact with service users	Elective subject for Year 2 students
SW328 Community Networking & Organizing	FT & PT	Y2	Field observation and community study	Elective subject for Year 2 students
SW441 Fieldwork Placement I	FT	Y1	Visiting placement agency and units for pre-placement preparation	
	PT	Y3		
SW442 Fieldwork Placement II	FT	Y2		
	PT	Y3		

B. Service-Opportunities from Outside (Supervised by CHSS Teaching Staff)

CHSS teaching staff would organize service learning opportunities either by inviting NGOs and other organizations as partners to initiate service projects, or coordinating with NGOs and other organizations in implementation of long-term service projects.

Students' contribution in the service project (e.g. involvement in program planning, as group leader, involvement in developing newsletters and publication, etc.) would be recognized and displayed in students' own Learning Portfolio

C. Service-Opportunities from Outside (Supervised by Organizations Outside the College)

Students are also encouraged to seek suitable ServL opportunities in the community settings. They should apply and registered for recognition of such service opportunities as part of their ServL program requirements.

Operation of Service-Learning

1. Service-Learning Team

1.1 A concurrent organizing committee or task force: **Service-Learning Team** is suggested to be set up. The composition of the Team is suggested to be:

- Service Learning Coordinator: Wong Kam Chung
- Social work teaching staff: Athena Lee
- Fieldwork Coordinator (representative from Fieldwork Team): Brenda So
- at least 1 supportive staff (for clerical support)
- at least 1 student representative from Social Work Society (if possible)

1.2 The Service-Learning Team is responsible for the following functions:

- (1) To design, manage, develop and coordinate ServL opportunities for students, in order to enrich students' exposure to community needs and enhance their personal development
- (2) To monitor, supervise and recognize students' performance in ServL program through record keeping and progress reporting mechanism
- (3) To advise students to set up one's own ServL Portfolio, and to recommend the College to issue transcript on the students' leaving College

2. As required by Hong Kong Social Workers Registration Board in 2007*, each ADSW graduate should have 100 hours "placement preparation and related activities" as graduation criteria. In promoting the ServL programs, we would count the service hours of ServL into this category of activities.

* Please refer to the document "Principles, Criteria and Standards for Recognizing Qualifications in Social Work for Registration of Registered Social Workers" revised by Social Workers Registration Board (2007), p.4.

3. A central Record and Portfolio System would be developed in recording, recognizing and monitoring students' involvement in ServL programs.

4. Generally speaking, operation of ServL would be divided into three stages:

4.1 Orientation Stage:

- Briefing to students concerning the operation of ServL
 - Choosing among ServL opportunities (for Category B & C ServL programs)
 - Service registration and preparation/ pre-service training
- 4.2 Implementation Stage:
- Implementation of service project(s)
 - Periodic progress reporting (oral and/or written)
 - Supervised and monitored by ServL Team (wherever appropriate)
- 4.3 Reflection and Consolidation Stage:
- Completion of service project(s)
 - Evaluation (with service users, with organizations concerned and students' self evaluation)
 - Submission of Reflective Journal
 - ServL program record keeping
5. Role of Students
- 5.1 Being active learners, students are expected to be motivated in participating in the ServL programs
- 5.2 Being reflective learners, students are expected to reflect on their learning and consolidate their learning experiences to daily life practice
- 5.3 Being service providers, students are expected to be accountable to the service users, service organizations and CHSS, the College.

Learning Portfolio

1. As a record of students' contribution in ServL, students are advised to develop their own **Learning Portfolio**, which would help the students in their further study and career development.
2. **Learning Portfolio** is "a representative or selective collection of one's work often amounting to a documentation for a personal résumé".
3. A Portfolio:
 - 3.1 provides direct evidence of the quality of a student's work and a basis for evaluation of work-in-progress
 - 3.2 defines assessment as a process, rather than necessarily as "final"; it permits re-evaluation by alternative evaluators, at different times and in different contexts (different from providing final quantitative grades)
 - 3.3 empowers the student to self-assess and continuously expand or otherwise improve her/his work

4. **Learning Portfolio** usually fulfills simultaneously two major functions namely:
 - 4.1 Assessment: to provide a body of student work that can be used to assess the quality of the student's past or ongoing performance
 - 4.2 Demonstration of Accomplishments

QA and Evaluation of Service Learning

As an innovative attempt to enhancing students' learning and competences, ServL would follow the QA mechanism of the College.

External Advisors would be invited to seek for their professional advice. In addition, systematic evident-based review/ evaluation of ServL would be conducted. It was suggested that a pre- and post- measure of students' competences would be implemented for this evaluative purpose.

Resources

Campus Compact. (2001). *Annual Service Statistics 2000*. Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University.

Eyler, J., & D. E. Giles, J. (1999). *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Fiske, E. B. (2001). *Learning in Deed. The Power of Service-Learning for American Schools*. Battle Creek, MI: W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

Service-learning - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service_learning

Official website of Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC)
<http://www.servicelearning.org/>

Prepared by: Wong Kam Chung
Date: September 2008

Appendix G :

Syllabus of GE004 Chall-tice

Program Level	Associate Diploma
Code and Title	GE004 Chall-tice
QF Level	2
Objectives	<p>Upon completion of this subject, students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ improve their civic awareness and concern for society; ◆ explore and experience with stronger resilience; ◆ cultivate their personal interests and social skills; and ◆ involve themselves in physical and recreational activities and strive for excellence.
No. of credits	2
Mode of delivery / teaching method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Participation in activities with specific learning opportunities ◆ Self reflection of learning experience
Contact hours	2 (Briefing session)
Qualification of instructor	Degree holders with training in psychology, preferably major in Social Work/ Social Sciences
Class size	Max. 40 students in a group
Subject Outline	<p>Students should complete the subject by participating the following categories of activities (either organized by Student Development Centre of the College or opportunities from external organizations):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community service ➤ Outdoor training ➤ Skill workshop ➤ Sport training & competition ➤ Culture talk ➤ Student club <p>The minimum requirements for participating in activities would be at least 26 hours.</p>
Mode of Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Continuous assessment (coursework) ➤ Participation (20%) ➤ Reflection journal (80%)